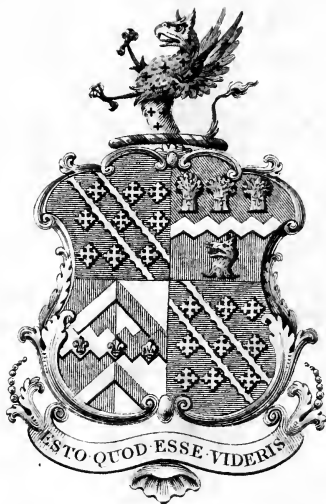


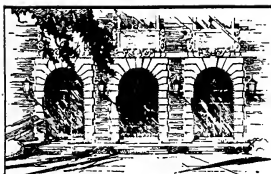
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THE
GUERRILLA CHIEF.

VOL. I.

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THE
GUERRILLA CHIEF:
A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY EMMA PARKER,

AUTHOR OF

*"Elfrida, Heiress of Belgrove;"—“Virginia, or the
Peace of Amiens;"—and “Arestas.”*

————— I seek thy strand,
Romantic Spain! 'Tis but to while away
The lingering hours in Fancy's fairy land,
And frame wild fictions of thy latter day.

M. R. MITFORD.

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THE
GUERRILLA CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

Bleeds not thy heart to see yon noble band,
The flower of England's youth, regain her land ;
Despoil'd of beauty, vigour—all but fame ?
All else now barter'd for the hero's name !
Pallid and agoniz'd, they now appear
The mutilated ghosts of what they were.

E. P.

“STRANGE! that the mere repetition
of what at first appeared so agreeable
should be sufficient to deprive it of
the power to charm ! Surely monoto-
ny and pleasure are irreconcilable !”

Mrs. Valency's barouche had thrice

traversed the Weymouth sands, and her daughters were complaining of the insipidity of daily resorting to the same place, when she replied to them by the above observation.—“ But,” continued she, “ you must now acknowledge, that this scene is not devoid of variety ; for, look ! there is a boat full of soldiers : it has just put off from the frigate, and I could fancy they were some unfortunate wounded heroes, just arrived from Portugal ; one of them seems to be reclining in the arms of another, and I think there is a person lying at the bottom of the boat.”

This suggestion had the instantaneous effect of interesting the young ladies, and consequently of giving animation to the objects around them. Their eyes became riveted on the boat ; while Mrs. Valency, with the promptness characteristic of an eager disposition, directed her coachman to drive

swiftly towards the spot, where she concluded the men would land: nor was she mistaken. “The crooked keel soon cut the yellow sand;” and the lady standing up in the carriage, which had now stopped at the margin of the water, bent anxiously forward, with a look of blended curiosity and compassion. Her daughters began to feel confused; and Honoria, the youngest, observed, that, should there be officers among the group, their comments might be excited on perceiving a carriage full of ladies, hastening, as it were, to meet them: her sister added, with an uneasy aspect, “Pray let us move off, mamma!”

“My dear girls, don’t distress yourselves,” returned their mother;—“these poor men are half dead, and too much engrossed with their own sufferings to bestow a thought upon us.”

There was some justice in this re-

mark, as well as in the conclusion which led Mrs. Valency to imagine, that the boat was occupied by disabled soldiers—for such they proved to be ; and all were too much engaged in endeavouring to exert themselves, or afford assistance to others, to permit them even to cast a glance towards the barouche. Such objects could not fail to excite the deepest commiseration in the breasts of the ladies, who beheld, with painful interest, men, who had sacrificed so much in the service of their country. Health, beauty, and activity were lost ! Maimed and disfigured, scarcely could the unfortunate (deprived of an arm, his head tied up, and the pallid hue of disease apparent on his hollow cheeks) extend his only remaining hand to lend a feeble assistance to his helpless comrade—not yet supplied with crutches, to aid him under the loss of his leg, of which the recent depri-

vation leaves him dependant as an infant. There, the sturdy sailor supports a sufferer, whose swimming head will not permit him to sustain himself; then follows a train of limping, ghastly looking figures, in whom every step seems to excite a spasm. Still there remains one at the bottom of the boat, stretched on a mattress, with his face concealed; one, who appears too near the brink of eternity to retain the slightest consciousness of the passing scene. As he could only be removed by the assistance of as many men as were requisite to transport him, the sailors agreed, (to use their own phrase) that, having once got rid of those they had *in tow*, they would return for the rest of the cargo.

Mrs. Valency's feelings had been fermenting all this time, in proportion as new objects appeared to excite them, and they had now gained an

ascendancy that rendered them no longer controulable ; and, calling vehemently to her footman to let down the step of the carriage, she descended with precipitation, bidding her daughters follow : when she desired that the prostrate sufferer might be transported in the vehicle ; and resigned it, inside and out, to as many of the disabled as could conveniently be placed about it.

“ Now,” said she to her coachman, “ lead the horses gently on to wherever these poor men are to be conveyed, and avoid the stones and rough places as much as possible.”

It appeared that the soldiers were going to the hospital ; but one of the sailors said, he supposed *he* who was the *worst*, (as he termed the person on the mattress) must be taken to an hotel.

“ To an *hotel*!” repeated Mrs. Valency, “ that poor dying man to an

hotel! to be distracted with noise, and hurried out of the world for want of attention; how very shocking.”

“ I don’t suppose, my lady, he would like to die in a common hospital,” observed the same sailor. Mrs. Valency considered — then turning quickly to one of her daughters, said, “ My dear, there is a lodging near our house, they are very civil people, and as we deal at the shop, perhaps — Here, Robert,” she continued to her footman, “ run as fast as you can, and see if the milliner near our house will accomodate this poor man; tell her she will be conferring a particular obligation upon me.”

Robert was quickly out of sight, the carriage slowly followed the direction he had taken, and Mrs. Valency and her daughters hastened forward, having told the sailors to attend till they had deposited their

charge. "Aye, my lady," returned one of them, "we'll heave the Major out whenever you chooses."

The ladies all agreed that they had never seen the barouche applied to so good a purpose before, and walked home with alacrity, rejoicing in the idea that they had saved the gallant invalid some few pangs of augmented misery. They had the satisfaction of finding the milliner ready to accede to their wishes in favour of the suffering stranger; and, being of a humane disposition, she was eager to pay him every attention his precarious state required. No time was lost in procuring medical advice, and the solicitous care he had long been in want of was now most amply supplied.

CHAPTER II.

On his bold visage, middle age
 Had slightly press'd its signet sage;
 Yet had not quench'd the open truth,
 And fiery vehemence of youth.

LADY OF THE LAKE.

MRS. Valency was the widow of a general officer, her income did not exceed seven hundred a year, independent of her pension; but, by living economically in the retirement of the country for ten months out of the twelve, she could afford to spend the remaining two in a style of fashionable elegance, any where she chose; and every summer, with her two only children, she either made a tour, or repair-

ed to some watering place. Her carriage she always retained, and had job horses for the time she was from home; but they no sooner returned to their cottage, than they resumed their customary frugal, though genteel manner of living. Regret for leaving gayer scenes had never yet intruded to blight their domestic comforts; for, educated on the best principles of mental cultivation, they could command innumerable resources; and having had much leisure for reflection, they beheld things in a rational point of view, and had long since discovered the real source of genuine and permanent enjoyment. Yet with the feelings incident to youth, they delighted in the anticipation of their summer excursion, more from a natural propensity to take pleasure in expectation, than from any satiety of their customary employments; and to prevent their ever becoming wearisome, as well as

from a desire now and then to take a peep at the world, and mix in new scenes, in order the better to relish old ones, Mrs. Valency persevered in this plan.

What we have said above may equally apply to the general disposition of both parent and children; the peculiarities of their individual characters we shall leave to develop themselves, as a more just opinion may be formed of them by their actions and conduct, than from any description that could be given. In regard to their persons, Mrs. Valency was still handsome, active, and vigorous—her daughters were both lovely in face and figure; the eldest about three and twenty, Honoria two years younger.

Their cottage home was situated near a village on the coast of Devonshire, scarce a quarter of a mile from the shore. It was a *modern cottage*;

that is, its outward appearance alone gave it a title to that appellation, as the interior presented all the comforts and conveniences of a roomy house; the apartments being quite large enough to prevent the danger of suffocation, even when all the doors and windows were shut. A lawn, shrubbery, gardens, &c. comprised every thing a reasonable creature could desire.

Mrs. Valency had an uncle, who spent much of his time with her: he was a superannuated admiral, and had no other ties than those which allied him to her family. He always made a point of accompanying her when she repaired to a watering place, and was that year of the party to Weymouth: they occupied the same house. The next to it was inhabited by a Mrs. Irby, her daughter, and her two sons, who were also neighbours of Mrs. Valency in Devonshire, and on

intimate terms with her. The lady was amusing the Admiral with an account of their morning adventure, when she was interrupted by the entrance of William, the youngest son of Mrs. Irby, a young man about one and twenty, who was intended for the church.

“Go on, go on, Mrs. Valency, I beg,” he exclaimed—“I am all anxiety to hear a particular relation of this extraordinary affair; it is the most unprecedented thing I ever heard of.”

“What do you mean?” asked Mrs. Valency with an air of surprise.

“Why, about your barouche being seized in that unjustifiable manner, to accommodate the sick soldiers, and your being compelled to walk home.”

“What are you dreaming of, boy!” said the Admiral;—“your imagination has been at work as usual, I suppose.”

“No, indeed, sir! but my mother’s

has I fancy ; for she told me, that she saw Mrs. Valency's carriage stop at the house opposite, as she was standing at the window ; that it was loaded with invalid soldiers, and that she soon after perceived the ladies walking home. She further told me, that you had been airing on the sands, madam," he continued to Mrs. Valency, " when these men were put on shore ; and that your carriage, being nearest at the moment, it had been seized by order of the magistrates, to transport the wounded men. *Who* was her informer, she did not tell me ; but here she comes to answer for herself."

The party was now augmented by the arrival of Mrs. Irby and her daughter : the two Mrs. Valency's entered the room at the same time.

" Pray, madam," said William to his mother, the moment she appeared,

“ what was it you was telling me about this lady’s barouche ?”

Mrs. Irby, disregarding his question, turned to Mrs. Valency, saying, “ I am come to hear all about your adventure this morning : do tell us the particulars.”

“ Why, according to your son’s account, you are perfectly acquainted with them already,” returned Mrs. Valency, laughing.

William looked a little angry, and said, somewhat impatiently to his mother, “ Did not you tell me, madam, that the carriage had been seized by order of the magistrates ?”

“ No, my dear ; I only said, I supposed it might be the case, as I have often heard of waggons being pressed for the accommodation of soldiers, when they were on forced marches, or any thing of that kind ; and I could not account for seeing Mrs. Valency’s carriage so strangely occupied, and

herself walking another way ; but I did not say it really *was* so, my dear."

" I am sure I *understood* you so," said William, sullenly.

Mrs. Valency now simply recounted the circumstances of the case ; when Mrs. Irby inquired, if she knew any thing more of the stranger, to whom she had proved so good a friend ?

" No," returned Mrs. Valency ;—
" but I believe one of the sailors called him Captain."

" *Major*, mamma," cried one of her daughters.

" O, *Major*, was it ? Very likely—I really do not recollect."

" Yes—*Major* !" said Mrs. Irby ;
" and I can tell you something more about him."

" Indeed !——"

" Is he handsome ?" interrupted her daughter, addressing Miss Valency, who replied,

“ I cannot possibly tell ; for, in the first place, his face was concealed ; and, in the next, had he once been beautiful as Adonis, it is not likely he should retain any resemblance to him in his present wretched state.”

“ O, but I assure you he is very good-looking,” cried Mrs. Irby, “ at least Doctor B——, who came to pay me a friendly visit, as he left him, said he had very good features, only of course he looks very sallow. But he has not been wounded ; only excessive fatigue-brought on a raging fever, which has lasted three months.”

“ A raging fever last *three* months !” drily observed William.

“ It has reduced him to death’s door,” continued Mrs. Irby ; “ his name, I understand, is Brompton.”

“ Not a very pretty one,” said Miss Irby.

“ But a very genteel one, Eliza : as a proof of it, he is the younger son

of a noble family ; he has several brothers and sisters, so his income must be very limited. Doctor B—— is going to write to his friends, to inform them of his situation, and no doubt some of them will come down here, and then we shall see what sort of people they are.”

“ Where is your eldest son, to-day ?” asked Mrs. Valency, tired of the subject of the invalid.

“ He left us soon after breakfast,” returned Mrs. Irby, saying he had an appointment with Sir Francis Heathcote’s groom ; I believe he is going to get some lessons of driving. Have you seen Sir Francis this morning ?”

“ No.”

“ I wonder at that,” said Mrs. Irby, casting a sly glance at Miss Valency, to whom Sir Francis had for some time been paying his serious addresses.

“ He will be here by and bye, I’ll

answer for it," said the Admiral, without raising his eyes from a newspaper he had taken up on Mrs. Irby's entrance.—At that moment Sir Francis appeared, when Mrs. Irby and her daughter took their leave; William still remained.

Sir Francis entered with the animated air of a happy lover. His figure was commanding, his countenance insinuating, and his whole appearance that of an elegant man of fashion. He had passed his thirtieth year, but his powers of pleasing were in their zenith; long had he beheld Miss Valency with eyes of admiration, and had contrived to throw himself in her way several succeeding summers, and evinced every inclination to attach himself to her; but she, apprehending that he might only be seeking temporary amusement, had rather shunned him, till on his meeting her at Weymouth, he had openly

declared himself to her uncle. He was now received at the house on the footing of her intended husband, while preparations were making for their nuptials, which were to take place on their return home.

Sir Francis expressed a lively interest for the invalid, and said he should pay his respects to him as soon as the physician would permit him to see strangers. William Irby observed, "I dare say this Major is not so ill as he fancies himself!"

"Why do you think so?" asked Sir Francis.

"Why, because he has been roped up on board ship with nothing to think of but his ailments, and nothing to tempt him to exert himself."

"Well, but in the act of landing," said Miss Valency, "there was a sufficient stimulus to excite exertion, had he been capable of it; and it was evident he was un-

able to assist himself in the slightest degree."

" You don't know that: had he been left in the boat, and every one gone away from him, I dare say he would have contrived to have crawled out in time, though he probably conceived it impossible at the moment."

" How strangely you talk," said Honoria, " surely you would not compel a suffering creature, in almost the last stage of debility, to——"

" O, no, no," interrupted William, " I don't mean that, only I think people generally fancy themselves much worse than they really are. I always recollect the story of the old woman who had been bed-ridden for ten years, but when the house was on fire was the first to run away; and, having found her legs, walked very well ever after."

" That old woman seems to be the standard of all your compari-

sons," said Sir Francis, laughing. "The other day when I sprained my ankle, nothing could persuade you that I could not walk on it if I *chose*; yet when you complained of the tooth ache, and I advised you to bite on it as hard as you could, you called me barbarous!"

"O don't talk of it," cried William, "the very idea sets all my teeth jarring."

"No wonder," said Honoria, "when fancy carries you so far, that you should impute so much to its operations."

"Why, that is exactly the case. I find imagination so continually at work to deceive me, that I am always suspecting others to be equally under its dominion. Now, for example, my mother as much believed what she told me about your barouche, as if she had actually heard it asserted as a fact; and *this* merely from the force

of her own conclusions on the subject. So it is in respect to many similar mistakes which she falls into. She would no more tell a falsehood than she would rob you of your purse; yet she is continually representing things in an erroneous light, either from not perfectly comprehending what is related to her, or from the strength of her own suggestions, which give their own colouring to every thing that she relates."

Sir Francis smiled at the accurate delineation of a character he knew to be just; the ladies thought it would have been better any body else had drawn it; but William still harboured some slight degree of resentment against his mother for having made his assertions appear doubtful, and could not refrain from touching on her ruling foible in order to clear his own veracity.

CHAPTER III.

And yon thin form !——the hectic red
 On his pale cheek unequal spread ;
 The head reclin'd, the loosen'd hair,
 The limbs relax'd, the mournful air.

ROKEBY.

THE invalid rapidly recovered from the extremity he had been reduced to, but continued still in a precarious state, owing to excessive debility. Sir Francis delayed not to execute his design of calling on him, and was much surprised to recognize in him an old acquaintance ; nor was the party at Mrs. Valency's less astonished on learning from the Baronet the following particulars relative to his visit.

“ You may conceive my amazement,” he continued, “ on finding myself in the presence of my old friend, Major Burlington, who was reclining on a sofa ; and, though certainly but the shadow of his former self, I knew him immediately.”

“ Burlington !” repeated Miss Valency, “ I thought Mrs. Irby said his name was Brompton.”

“ So she did.” rejoined Sir Francis, “ and her intelligence on that head was about as accurate as the other particulars she informed us of relating to the Major, whom I have known from a boy. In the first place, so far from being one of a numerous family, he has neither father, mother, nor sisters ; one only brother is the sole surviving relative I ever heard him mention. To this brother he is enthusiastically attached ; there is little more than a year between them ; the Major is the youngest, and he must now—let me

see—he must now, be about five or six and twenty. He was so afraid of distressing this brother, that he would not permit Doctor B—— to write to inform him of his situation, though you know Mrs. Irby affirmed the contrary; and this *three months' fever*, which she asserted had reduced him to his present state, and *not* a wound, is also the offspring of her imagination. His left arm is now useless, owing to a musket ball having lodged in it; and the blood he lost on that occasion, together with several other considerable wounds, occasions his present weakness.”

“Poor Mrs. Irby! she is certainly very unfortunate,” said Mrs Valency smiling, “for she never can obtain a correct account of any transaction, let it be ever so trifling: it must certainly be some defect in her comprehension, for she is otherwise really a very good sort of woman.”

All cast an approving glance on Mrs. Valency, for they knew the amiable motive that always prompted her to find an excuse for those who appeared censurable ; for however little we may be inclined to follow such an example, we cannot forbear admiring it.

“ Well,” said Honoria, “ I am afraid you have proved poor Mrs. Irby’s fallibility in every point but one : pray has this gentleman any claim to the comeliness of features she ascribed to him ?”

“ I can only say,” returned Sir Francis, “ I never remember his having any pretensions to good looks, and now I think he is absolutely plain ; his brother is reckoned handsome, but I can’t say I ever thought him so. However, respecting the Major, you may judge for yourselves in the course of a few days ; as he intends crawling over, as soon as he can

move out, to thank you for your attention to him."

Another week elapsed, when Major Burlington fulfilled his intention of expressing his gratitude to Mrs. Valency, for her extreme kindness; for she had been unremitting in sending him every little delicacy she conceived essential to an invalid; and this she had done from the natural goodness of her heart: to a common soldier, in the same situation, she would have been equally benevolent.

Miss Valency was alone when the Major was announced. She surveyed him with some degree of surprise; for, from what Sir Francis had said, she expected to have seen a very different sort of person.

Major Burlington was rather above the middle height, his figure well-proportioned, his features finely turned, and the whole expression of his countenance not less interesting for its pallid hue, than for its mild, genteel,

prepossessing aspect. The pleasing modulation of his voice exactly harmonized with the gentle elegance of his movements, and the pensive lustre of an eye

——“ That wept the tale of woe,
Yet could with sudden rapture glow ;
That timid feared to give offence,
Yet beamed with bright intelligence.”*

His arm still continued in a sling, and he required the assistance of a stick to aid his steps. He seated himself with a sigh of weariness, and seemed to want breath to express his acknowledgments for the friendliness that had been shewn him, yet evinced his deep sense of it with much emotion. In a few minutes he recovered himself sufficiently to converse ; and, on his making some allusion to his brother, Miss Valency observed, how

* De Salkeld. Rev. George Warington.

much that brother must regret not having been with him at such a time.

“ Yes,” returned the Major, “ I know he will be angry with me, when he learns how long I have been in England; but I would on no account interrupt his pleasures, and be the means of confining him to a sick room, when there is, in fact, not the least occasion for it. I know his disposition so well, that I am convinced, was he aware of my situation, he would fly to me, and never quit my side, till I could again enjoy myself as well as ever: I shall join him as soon as I am able, and shall have the pleasure of thinking I have spared him much uneasiness,”

Miss Valency made some observation on the amiable motive that made him so considerate, when he continued with much energy—

“ We are every thing to each other; we lost our parents in our infancy,

and have not a single relation surviving, who has any claim on our affections. The difference in our ages is so trifling, that we were children and men together ; educated at the same seminaries, and never separated, till a predilection for a military life induced me to select the army as my profession. Soon after my brother took possession of his hereditary property, which is too considerable to require that he should pursue any profession as a matter of necessity, he was traveling abroad for two or three years, but the renewal of hostilities obliged him to return."

Miss Valency perceived that Major Burlington purposely dwelt on the subject of his connexions, in order to convince her of his respectability, and that the civility he had received, had not been lavished on a person, who might not with safety be admitted as an acquaintance. To prove

that she had received a good report of him from high authority, she observed, that Sir Francis Heathcote had expressed his satisfaction, in having met in him an old and intimate friend. The Major, with an aspect of indifference, returned, that he had been *acquainted* with Sir. Francis several years, but he could boast of no *intimacy* with him at present. Miss Valency looked surprised, and rather hurt; and the anxiety that discovered itself in her countenance, together with the inquiring glance she cast on him, convinced the Major she expected an explanation of his words, and he went on.

“ My knowledge of Sir Francis Heathcote originated in such peculiar circumstances, as made an undelible impression on my then youthful mind.”——He hesitated, when Miss Valency, with increased uneasiness

apparent in her looks, said, "Are they such as you are forbidden to explain?"

"No," he returned calmly, "I do not feel myself bound by consideration for Sir Francis to suppress the particulars of a detail, he has long ceased to remember as he ought. I was about eighteen, when my brother and I returned to spend one of the vacations at the house of our guardian, in the vicinity of which there resided a very respectable widow lady, who had an only daughter. We had been in the habit of visiting at the house, and were about to repair there as usual, when we learnt that the young lady (you will excuse my mentioning names) was so dangerously ill, that no company could be admitted. She had been declining for some time, and was then supposed to be in a confirmed consumption. She was a most amiable, as well as beautiful

girl ; and we were conversing with deep regret on the subject, when her mother suddenly burst into the apartment, where we were sitting with our guardian. Her appearance evinced the most violent agitation and grief ; and, in the presence of both my brother and self, she explained the whole source of her wretchedness to our guardian, whose advice she came to implore. “ My child is dying,” she exclaimed, “ and Sir Francis Heathcote is her murderer !”

Miss Valency turned pale ; but Major Burlington, without appearing to observe it, went on.

“ By the unhappy mother’s explanation, we learnt that Sir Francis had, by his own request, been introduced to her daughter at a ball, about a year prior to that period, and from that time had paid her the most marked attention, and it was soon universally reported that they were to be married

immediately ; but still he delayed to declare himself either to the mother or daughter, nor could they gain resolution to forbid him the house, while he remained silent on the nature of his pretensions. At length he voluntarily relaxed his visits, left the place, and they neither heard nor saw any thing of him for several months. The unfortunate young lady, who had placed all her hopes of happiness on a union with this unworthy man, who had deceived her into a persuasion that he fervently loved her, but that some cause, unknown to her, prevented his being explicit, gradually drooped beneath the weight of her disappointment, and her health daily more impaired, she was at length reduced to the most alarming state. She had just recovered from a fainting fit, when her mother, in all the anguish of despair, flew to our guardian, and appealed to him as an old friend, con-

jured him to write to Sir Francis, and inform him of her daughter's situation; and, in the terror and anxiety of the moment, forgot every thing, but what she conceived the only means of prolonging her child's existence. My guardian complied with her request, and addressed a letter to Sir Francis, containing a representation, which none but a perfect savage could have contemplated unmoved. It had the effect expected: as soon as it was possible Sir Francis arrived. He was so strongly impressed with the dread, that if not actually no more, the young lady was at the point of death, that he dared not venture to the house, and the first time I saw him was when he entered the presence of my guardian; his countenance marked by horror, and his whole appearance indicative of agony and remorse. My guardian relieved him by saying she was better, and pre-

pared to expect him ; when, finding the interview could no longer be delayed, Sir Francis, in violent trepidation, rushed out of the house. The lady's gradual recovery was the consequence of his return ; and, while she continued in a precarious state, his attention to her was unremitting, and her mother informed us that he had explained himself to her entire satisfaction ; but, that his affairs at that time were so involved, as to forbid his marrying ; but, whenever it was *possible*, her daughter was to be his wife : meantime they were regularly engaged, my guardian interfered no farther ; he knew Sir Francis was reputed wealthy, but whatever were his suspicions, he kept them to himself ; for the mother and daughter were again so completely infatuated, that they would not have attended to them. It is now six years since this affair took place, and this *nominal* en-

gement existed till last winter. The lady had frequent relapses of indisposition, at which times Sir Francis never failed to hasten to her; in the intervening period, it is notorious, he never was in a place without attaching himself to some young lady of beauty or distinction; but when a serious explanation appeared to be expected, the plea of his engagement offered a ready excuse: this, however, can now no longer avail him, for I am happy to say the young lady's reason has at length triumphed over her ill-placed passion, and she has gained resolution to break off the connexion; a measure Sir Francis, by his indifference and neglect, premeditatedly provoked her to adopt, in order that he might avoid the imputation of having deserted her, and the reflection that might fall on him, should any fatal consequences ensue." The Major paused, when Miss Valency, in a

low tone, asked if he had ever heard more of the lady? To which he replied, he had not gained any intelligence respecting her for some time, and added, “ I saw her, about a year ago, just before I quitted England ; she was then merely the shadow of her former self, though she is still youthful ; for she was only seventeen when Sir Francis first saw her ; but so greatly is her beauty impaired, that she appears considerably older than she is,”

Major Burlington again paused, in expectation of Miss Valency’s animadversions, but she remained silent, and he continued.

“ After what I have now related, it cannot be supposed that I could entertain any great degree of *veneration* for Sir Francis Heathcote, nor any wish to rank him among my friends ; we have frequently met since our first encounter, and always as acquaintances, and in his heart Sir Francis

likes me no better than I do him ; and though he *honoured* me with the appellation of his *old friend*, I am perfectly aware that, but for a mistake which he mentioned relative to my name, he would not have taken the trouble to find me out."

Miss Valency faintly smiled, but spoke not. The entrance of her mother and sister proved a most seasonable relief to her, and she soon found a pretext for leaving the room when an indifferent subject was started.

Mrs. Irby came in to pay her morning visit, and no sooner perceived the Major, than guessing who he was, she, without waiting for an introduction, addressed him most cordially saying, "Major Brompton I am rejoiced to see you so much recovered."

"Burlington," whispered Honoria. "I beg your pardon, Major Turlington, I am sorry to see your arm in a

sling; I hope you have not met with any accident since you arrived."

The Major replied in the negative, and expressed himself obliged by her solicitude for his welfare.

"Indeed," she continued, "the stairs at your lodgings are extremely bad; I mounted them one day to look at the finery in the milliner's show room; I should not wonder at any body falling down, and breaking their neck instead of their arm."

"An accident certainly might happen in descending them, but a very little caution——"

"Accident!" interrupted Mrs. Irby, only catching that word from the low key in which the Major spoke.

"I have no doubt many have happened there before—but I hope Major Turlington you have not neglected it!"

Honorina again rectified the error in the name, while the Major, rather op-

pressed by this vociferous attack, took the opportunity of bowing off.

Mrs. Irby continued talking of him till she tired all her auditors, and failed not, when she returned home, to inform her family, that poor Major *Birmingham* had fallen down those abominable stairs, at the milliner's, and broken his arm.

CHAPTER IV.

I will not complain, and though chill'd is affection,

With me no corroding resentment shall live ;

My bosom is calm'd by the simple reflection,

That both may be wrong, and that both should forgive.

LORD BYRON.

THE sensations Miss Valency experienced, after her interview with Major Burlington, were of the most painful description : not that she entertained any doubts of Sir Francis's intentions in regard to herself, for he had been perfectly unreserved in his explanation to the Admiral, and was the very next day going to London, in order to expedite the settlements ;

but, the lack of principle, honour, and feeling, which his conduct had betrayed, made her tremble for her future happiness in a union with him. When, too, she reflected what wretchedness it might occasion the unfortunate lady he had treated so cruelly, and perhaps many others, whose very existence she was ignorant of—she felt inclined to resign all thoughts of a connexion that must be built upon the misery of others. Major Burlington's communication had a cast of authenticity that could not be disputed; and, in support of it, she could not fail to recollect how often, at different places where she had met the Baronet, she had heard it reported, that he was attached to *such* or *such* a lady. It was *that* which had first put her on her guard against him, and caused her to shun him. But since he had so openly avowed himself her lover, and her heart had em-

braced his cause, she had persuaded herself that his former temporary prepossessions, had only been affected to provoke her jealousy, and with a view of making her betray a partiality for him which he had so long endeavoured to excite, even, as it now appeared, at the very time that he was engaged to another.

One only idea presented itself to sooth her feelings; which was, that she certainly must have inspired Sir Francis with a very strong attachment, before he could have resolved on giving up that liberty he had hitherto been so averse to resigning.

“ Yet,” thought she, “ had my affections been attained with less difficulty, I too should doubtless have been of the number of his victims; but opposition has stimulated his passion, till it has gained ascendancy, even over his vanity.”

Such was in some measure the

case; but Sir Francis's vanity began to be satiated with the multitude of sacrifices he had devoted to it; and, having attained his thirty-fifth year, he conceived it time seriously to think of matrimony; and *self* being ever the primary object in his estimation, he considered, that a barren and deserted old age held out no very alluring prospect; but that, on the contrary, a beautiful young wife, and a rising offspring, offered a much more pleasing contemplation. Under the influence of these reflections, he determined to espouse Miss Valency, in whom he saw combined every requisite to give charms to domestic life. Fortune was no object to him, and her connexions were genteel and highly respectable.

Miss Valency had so long withheld her heart from yielding to the Baronet's solicitations, that when at length she did surrender it, it was not with

that entire devotedness, with which she would have resigned it to one whom she had never mistrusted. She was not romantically in love, but felt a very sincere regard for him, or rather for the person she imagined him to be. She thought with pleasure of becoming his wife, and knew no one with whom she believed she could be so happy. He was very agreeable, handsome in person, entertaining in conversation, and the most assiduous lover in the world ; so much so, that no one could be in company with him without discovering to whom he was devoted.

The fact was, that Sir Francis had been so constantly in the habit of selecting some fair object to particularize, and pay exclusive attention to, wherever he was in the company of females, that it was quite a matter *of course* to him, and he would not have felt satisfied had he not been

persuaded, that all the gentlemen present were envying him the monopoly of the loveliest woman in the room.

Major Burlington was so perfectly acquainted with the Baronet's propensity, that he no sooner gathered from his conversation, that he was intimate in Mrs. Valency's family, than he was convinced one of the young ladies was the object of attraction; and his conclusions were confirmed by hearing, through the people where he lodged, a report to the same effect. He thought he could not do a more friendly act, in return for the kindness that had been shewn him, than to apprise his friends, for *such* they had proved themselves, of what sort of character they were admitting on an intimacy. Sir Francis had breathed no hint of his approaching nuptials, in the Major's presence, or the latter would have been silent on the sub-

ject of the Baronet's past conduct; but he entertained not a doubt, that he was merely seeking food for his vanity, and he felt impatient for an opportunity of putting the family on its guard; and, so favourable an occasion occurring at his first visit, he at once resolved to avail himself of it.

By the emotion Miss Valency betrayed, he inferred that it was to her Sir Francis had attached himself, and that he had succeeded in exciting an interest in her heart; and that induced Major Burlington to enter more into particulars than he would otherwise have done. He felt deeply for the pain he feared he was inflicting, but consoled himself with the thought that it would be the means of preventing future and protracted misery.

As Miss Valency reflected on the author of her present unhappiness (as she at the moment considered

Major Burlington), she felt a degree of resentment against him for the interruption he had offered to her agreeable prospects; but the sensation was short-lived, and she became sensible that she ought to be obliged to him, as his motive was apparent. But it suddenly struck her that he might have some private cause of enmity against Sir Francis, and that the exaggerated light in which he had represented the circumstances he had related, had given to them so strong a colouring. She recalled what he had alledged of the Baronet's dislike of him, but but then she recollected what Sir Francis had said of Major Burlington's person; and, with a pang, she admitted it was unjust, and betrayed either envy or aversion.

She was glad he was going to London the next day; for, under the impression that now affected her mind, she felt that she could not behave to

him as usual. During his absence she should have leisure to reflect on what she had heard, consult her friends, and determine on how she ought to act. She resolved not to mention a word of what had transpired till he was gone, and to endeavour as far as was in her power to conceal that any thing had occurred to distress her, for she feared the Baronet (who would of course hear of Major Burlington's visit) might suspect the truth. Stimulated by this apprehension, she exerted herself to banish all semblance of uneasiness, nor did Sir Francis, in the course of the evening, perceive any thing in her demeanour calculated to excite his suspicions. He asked her how she liked Major Burlington? She replied that she could not pretend to form an opinion of a person in one interview, but that he appeared mild and amiable. Sir Francis dissented

by his looks, but, said nothing. Honoria cried,

“ But how could you say he was not good looking? he is the most interesting man I have seen a long time, indeed I think him quite handsome.”

“ Handsome !” echoed Sir Francis, in a tone of amazement,—“ poor, sallow, miserable looking animal!—no, poor Burlington has certainly no pretensions to——”

“ You must permit *us* to decide on *that*,” interrupted Honoria; “ we will allow you to be the arbiter of female beauty, but I am quite sure there are few women, who would not admit Major Burlington to be handsome.”

“ That may be,” said the Baronet with some asperity, “ but *I* cannot admit the correctness of the female taste in all instances. For example, there is Spencer Burlington, the Major’s brother, he is in my eyes, little less than downright *ugly*, and the most insufferable

coxcomb breathing; yet he is cried up, and made such a fuss about, all the women running after him, till his head is absolutely turned. It is sickening to see such puppies encouraged to make fools of themselves. I really think the ladies do it merely to amuse themselves; I can account for it no otherwise."

"Is he like his brother?" asked Honoria; "if he is that will account for it sufficiently!"

Sir Francis affected not to hear the latter part of this speech, but replied to the former interrogation.

"No, not at all; he is a dancing, grinning, capering Mr. Merryman, who always seems as if he was striving to convince people how little he cared for them, and how perfectly well satisfied he was with himself: in short, he is exactly what he promised to be when a boy; all that disgusting self-conceit about him, that betrays a

fancied superiority ; I could trace it in his looks the very first time I ever saw *him*."

" How did your acquaintance originate ?" Demanded Miss Valency, with a throbbing heart, but in a tone of indifference.

Sir Francis, for a moment [appeared at a loss ; he stammered, and then said he really had forgotten : but suddenly seeming to recollect himself, he added :

" O ! I remember now ; I was acquainted with one of their guardians, at whose house I encountered both the Burlingtons ; and, to please the old gentleman, I took notice of them. Since then we have often met, but Spencer Burlington is to me so extremely disagreeable, that I never *see* him when I can help it ; though he generally contrives to force himself on the notice of whatever company he may be in. His brother is less offensive, because he presumes less ; but I really

believe Speneer Burlington thinks every woman he speaks to is in love with him ; at all events, he wishes to make them so."

"Two of a trade never agree," said the Admiral, laying down a periodical work, in which, heedless of the conversation that was passing, he had been reading a severe philippic on another production ; while Honoria was laughing aside, at the appositeness of his remark to the discourse they had been engaged in, the Admiral continued intent on his subject.

"It is astonishing how these authors delight in cutting up each other ! The moment a person has appeared in print, no matter under how insignificant a form, they think themselves entitled to criticise, without mercy, whatever comes under their eyes."

"That an author should read with the eye of a critic," observed Mrs. Valency, "I think not only natural,

but proper, in order to avoid the faults he may discern in the works of others."

"Certainly; but why should he publish the fruits of his discernment to the world?"

"Simply to prove that he has discernment."

"Then I should be much better pleased if he would make use of it to discover that the bickerings of authors are very uninteresting to readers in general; and, that the less they find fault with others, the more clemency they will meet with themselves. What do you think of this work Sir Francis?" continued the Admiral—but Sir Francis was so busy whispering to Miss Valency, that he heard him not; and with a smile the old gentleman resumed his book, which he seldom found himself called on to relinquish, when the Baronet was the only guest.

CHAPTER V.

On his dark face a scorching clime,
 And toil, had done the work of time ;
 Roughen'd the brow, the temples bar'd,
 And sable hairs with silver shar'd ;
 Yet left what age alone could tame,
 The lip of pride, the eye of flame.

ROKEBY.

MISS VALENCY passed a sleepless night ; the manner in which Sir Francis had spoken of Major Burlington, and his brother, plainly evinced the disposition of his heart towards them, and seemed to corroborate all that the Major had asserted ; betraying that uncharitable sentiment people are too apt to harbour against those whom

they know to be acquainted with their foibles.

She no longer delayed imparting to her mother and sister the substance of Major Burlington's communication. They most fully participated in her uneasiness, nor could dispute the justice of her determination when she declared, that were she but convinced, that the young lady in question was still (notwithstanding the effort she had made to resign him) attached to Sir Francis, she should not hesitate a moment in dissolving her engagement with him. But how could that be ascertained? Major Burlington had neither mentioned her name, nor that of his guardian. Miss Valency suddenly recollected some letters that Sir Francis had once shewn her as models of style and hand writing. At his request she had perused them, when she could not question their being the effusions

of a refined and fervent attachment to himself. Somewhat disgusted at the vanity which had impelled him to display them to her, she returned them, coldly observing, that the fair writer of those epistles had certainly never intended that they should meet any eyes but his, and little thought they would be the means of deterring another of her own sex from ever venturing to correspond with him. Sir Francis looked much discontented, but assured her, that had not the hand which had traced them been long since mingled with the dust, no consideration should have induced him to shew them. Miss Valency had believed him at the time, but she now began to question his veracity. She remembered the signature was "Elizabeth Melville," and she strongly suspected that this was the very person Major Burlington had alluded to. To ascertain that point she

thought would not be difficult ; and, should her conclusions prove just, she should have a clue to enable her to discover the actual situation of the young lady. She expressed all her thoughts to her mother and sister ; and the former suggested the propriety of consulting the Admiral, to which her daughter readily assented.

He was accordingly intrusted with the whole affair ; but they found his ideas on the subject widely differed from theirs. He was extremely angry with Major Burlington for his officious interference, (as he termed it) and continued with great warmth—

“ What have you to do with Sir Francis’s former flirtations ? He prefers you to every body else, and is not that sufficient ? Would you lose the chance of such a capital match for a nonsensical idea about a love-sick girl ; who, after all, probably does not care a farthing for him now, and may have

broken off the engagement because she liked somebody else better. It is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of in my life; any one would suppose you wanted a pretext for getting off, or in other words jilting him!"

"I am sorry it appears in a *ridiculous* point of view to you, Sir," returned Miss Valency, "for I consider it of the *first* consequence, and would rather live single all my life than prove accessory to the misery of another; nay, I am certain, I should but insure my own by a connexion formed under such auspices; and, independent of any consideration for this unfortunate young lady, I question if I should not be committing an act of the rashest imprudence, in allying myself to a man who could act as he is alleged to have acted; and I declare, could I ascertain, beyond a doubt, that this account has not been exag-

gerated, I would resolve on giving him up."

"You provoke me beyond measure," cried the Admiral, extremely irritated, "I can't understand how you for a moment can harbour such a suspicion of a man whom you affect to love. I should be much less surprised if your wrath was kindled against a stranger who dared to traduce him."

Mrs. Valency now spoke.—"I see no motive Major Burlington could have for traducing Sir Francis; indeed, I should rather think he was instigated by the most friendly intention. I certainly should feel the liveliest regret at dissolving a connexion I conceived so very desirable; and, if Sir Francis's former predilections had been confined to mere flirtations, I should have thought little of it; but if the life of an amiable young woman has been at stake through his caprice

and neglect, it alters the case entirely, and I should grieve to see my child united to a man so devoid of feeling and principle."

" Poph, poph, poph—all stuff and romantic nonsense : you have only heard *one* side of the story ; and, as for you, Ella, I cannot help questioning the strength of your affection, when I see you so ready to give up your lover."

" I *am* ready to give him up, Sir," returned Miss Valency, with difficulty suppressing her tears, " though I own it would cost me a most painful effort ; yet I *am* ready, and *will* give him up, if my suspicions are verified."

The subject was continued some time longer, while the Admiral persevered in supporting Sir Francis in the most strenuous manner. He had set his heart on the match, and took some credit to himself for having (as he imagined) brought the Baronet to

the *point* by a little judicious manœuvring, to which he entirely imputed Sir Francis's candid declaration. His object was to secure wealthy men of rank for his grand nieces, whom he loved as his children, and he believed he had adopted the most effectual means of promoting their felicity. He would have shrunk with horror from the idea of their forming a connexion with a man, whose character was sullied by any of those stains which the world pronounces to be indelible; but *inconstancy* in his *own* sex he thought a very pardonable offence, though in a *woman* a crime never to be forgiven. He had suffered much in his youth from the indecision of a distinguished beauty, who, after keeping him some time in suspense, had thought fit to prefer his rival. From that period he had abjured the tender passion, and made ambition his idol, and he never failed to experience a sensation of

pleasure, when he heard of an instance of perjured love, in which the *lady* was the sufferer. Not that he was of a cruel, or revengeful disposition, but his temper was inclined to moroseness, and he never could reflect upon an injury that had been committed against him, with that perfect charity which results from entire forgiveness, though he professed not to harbour resentment. He prided himself on avoiding all the peculiarities indicative of his profession, and he hated every thing that put him in mind of it. He had pursued it as the road to fame and wealth, and had attained them at the expense of temper and good looks; the latter were of little consequence at his age, but the former would have been a source of never-ending comfort to him; but the absolute and despotic sway exercised over a ship's crew, had given a cast to his disposition it could never recover,

any more than his prominent features could the influence of climates and seasons. His stature, which was of gigantic height, was contracted to the standard of common sized men, by the strong inclination of his body ; in other respects, though bordering on seventy, he betrayed few of the infirmities of age. His dress was particular, and never varied. Over a brown bob wig, he wore a perfectly *circular* hat with a wide rim, and broad black ribbon tied in a large bow in front ; a very thin cravat, from which his long neck protruded some inches ; a low collared light green *frock* coat, united by gilt buttons down the front, reaching to the tops of an enormous pair of jack boots ; he was always decorated with a *bouquet* ; and, if he could get nothing better, he would stick a piece of thyme or rosemary in his button hole ; on no occasion was he ever known to

wear a great coat. Thus apparelled he would stride over the country for miles, in hopes of keeping off his inveterate enemy the gout, which often interrupted his rambles, and laid him up for months together. His eccentric appearance excited the curiosity of all who beheld him, but that rather gratified him, for he was proud of his rank, and liked people to inquire who he was; and, with this view, he probably persevered in a mode of dress peculiar to himself. Having said thus much of the Admiral, we must not quit him without observing, that he had his agreeable *fits*, and while every body gave way to him, and appealed to him as an oracle, he was often extremely pleasant; but, when he was crossed by opposition, though he did not always denote rage, he would remain silent and sullen for hours, and sometimes days together. But he *could* be wrought upon, for he was

not destitute of feeling ; his affections centred wholly in Mrs. Valency's family, and he agreed with them better than he could have been expected ; for their tempers were amiable, though we by no means intend to imply that they were of that meek, tame, passive disposition we have so often *read* of, but never yet had the good fortune to encounter.

CHAPTER VI.

A heart too soft from early life,
To hold with fortune needful strife.

ROKEBY.

MISS VALENCY was anxious to be again in Major Burlington's company, hoping an opportunity might occur to discover if *Melville* was the name of the lady he alluded to. She knew he would be cautious not to suffer it to transpire if he was aware of her design, but she trusted by a little finesse to counteract his prudence. Her mother, participating in all her feelings, invited the Major to spend an evening with them; and, as he was now rapidly recovering, he with pleasure availed

himself of her hospitality. A letter Miss Valency that morning received from Sir Francis, replete with the fondest expressions of confiding love, made her still more desirous of obtaining the information, she knew it was in the Major's power to impart. Mrs. Irby's family, and some other, were assembled to meet him, and at the same time afforded Ella an opportunity of conversing with him more conveniently than she could, had only a few been present, when the conversation must have been general. It was easy to seat herself next him without any apparent contrivance; and, as the rest of the party were formed into couples and trios, it remained for these two to entertain each other. But Ella found it was not so easy a task as she had imagined, to lead the conversation to the subject she wished, and which so engrossed her mind, as to render her absent and

inattentive to every thing the Major said. At length she abruptly asked him if he were acquainted with Lord Melville?

“ No,” returned the Major; “ is he at Weymouth?”

“ O no, I believe not,” said Ella.

“ Is his Lordship a particular friend of yours?” inquired Major Burlington, concluding she had of course some motive for the sudden mention of this noble personage.

“ No,” she replied, slightly colouring.

“ I am not acquainted with a single person of that name; it is rather uncommon, is not it?”

“ No, I think not, I have met with it frequently.”

“ In females?” was on the lips of Ella, but caution stopped her, and the Major added, “ It is by no means uncommon in the army.”

This seemed to imply an illusion to

some military acquaintance, and Ella was as much in the dark as ever. A walk on the esplanade was proposed by some of the party, which was assented to by the majority of the company. Mrs. Valency approached the Major, saying, she hoped he would not attempt what might fatigue him, but attach himself to the home division; but he was averse to remaining behind the younger part, and said he thought a turn or two would be of service to him. Again he found himself next to Miss Valency, without being aware that he had any thing but chance to thank for the honour of a place by her side. He was unable to keep up with the rest of the party, so that they were soon at a distance, and he apologized to Ella for detaining her; but, she said she preferred walking slow, and would not permit him to attempt hurrying himself; observing, that when their friends turned, they should re-unite.

Major Burlington could not impute her behaviour to any motive flattering to his vanity, as her abstracted air, and vague answers convinced him he engaged very little of her attention ; and he concluded that compassion alone induced her to suit her pace to his. She was still lost in a maze of perplexity, in which she vainly endeavoured to discover the means of accomplishing her design, when she was startled by an exclamation of pleasure and surprise from her companion, who suddenly hastened forward with extended hand, towards an elderly gentleman, who was advancing with two ladies.

Mutual expressions of pleasure, denoting an unexpected meeting, were uttered by both parties ; the ladies too shook hands with Major Burlington, and each seemed equally rejoiced at the *rencontre*. Ella concluded by their appearance that the elder lady and

gentleman were the parents of the younger female, who had a pleasing countenance, but whose looks indicated ill health: her smile was languid, and she spoke in the low voice of depression, though evidently pleased at beholding Major Burlington. That gentleman found himself rather in an awkward predicament; he was extremely averse to quitting his old friends, almost at the moment they had met, but wished to join them for a short time, to say all that seems struggling for utterance at the sight of friends, from whom we have been long separated. But to quit Miss Valency, and leave her alone, (for her party was at the furthest end of the esplanade) was out of the question; so, to compromise the matter, he begged leave to introduce her to one of his oldest friends, as he presented Mr. Grantly; then added, turning to the ladies, "Mrs. and Miss Melville."

Ella felt the blood rush to her heart,

which beat violently for some moments, as (having joined the strangers,) she endeavoured to overcome the agitation she experienced from the idea, which instantly suggested itself, that this Mr. Grantly was the gentleman the Major had alluded to as his guardian, and the two females the very persons, whose injuries had so exasperated him against Sir Francis Heathcote. She was unable for some minutes to attempt joining in conversation, but every word that was spoken confirmed her suspicions.

Mrs. Melville, a goodnatured, loquacious, but by no means sensible woman, informed Major Burlington, that the precarious state of her daughter's health had occasioned their repairing to Weymouth, in order to try the efficacy of sea bathing, and that Mr Grantly had been so kind as to volunteer escorting them, and promised to be their beau while there.

“Elizabeth is better already I think,” continued Mrs Melville; “her cough is less violent, and she has not complained of her old pain in the side since we set out”

“Elizabeth!” mentally replied Ella; “*Elizabeth Melville*. Good heavens! there is no longer any room for doubt! unfortunate interesting creature! rather would I die than inflict another pang on that heart which has endured so much.”

Miss Melville, faintly smiling, said, “she did indeed feel considerably better, and had no doubt she should soon be quite well.”—She suppressed a sigh as she terminated these words. Ella could not look at her; she was convinced if she did, she should burst into tears; she even wished she could shut her ears to a voice that seemed to her as the low moanings of a broken heart, and the gentle though solemn demonstration that proclaimed Sir Francis a murderer. She rejoiced to perceive

her party approaching, when, wishing the strangers a hurried good evening, she hastened from them, leaving both them and the Major impressed with an idea that she was displeased at the introduction, and that her silence and reserve proceeded from pride.

As she quitted them, Major Burlington said, he should return very speedily to Mrs. Valency, which he accordingly did, after having remained a short time longer in conversation with his friends. The walking party had re-entered, but Miss Valency had retired on the plea of a trifling indisposition. Her mother and sister partly guessed the cause, and on Honoria's following her, Ella confessed to her that all her suspicions were verified; in her then state of mind she wished to be alone, but would inform her of every particular at the next opportunity.

Honoraria, with a heavy heart rejoined the party in the drawing room. Music was proposed : both Miss Irby and Honoraria were performers, and also sung together ; but had it not been for the profound attention Major Burlington and William Irby paid to their harmony, and the pleasure they appeared to derive from it, the young ladies would speedily have ceased their exertions ; for Mrs. Irby and her eldest son were doing their utmost to support, what they called *conversation*, with some persons at the further end of the room. Mrs. Valency could not be so rude as to impose silence on them, or force them to attend to what it was evident gave them no amusement. As to the Admiral, he was suffering the horrors of a sullen fit. He was very much displeased at Major Burlington's being invited to the house ; and, though he did not choose to say any thing about it, his

feelings on the occasion were very apparent to those who understood their operations. He had withdrawn to the most retired corner of the room, and affected to be reading, though he probably was only pondering on the cause of his discontent. His age was an excuse for the peculiarity of his manner, and no one present thought of resenting what in a young person would have been considered as an affront to the company.

Jonathan Irby's monotonous and incessant *drawl*, was much more annoying than the Admiral's total silence. Jonathan was never tired of hearing his own voice, and was the only person in the world that could *out-talk* his mother. He aimed at being a man of *ton*; and, in order to succeed in his design, endeavoured to copy the manners of his groom as nearly as possible. But even in that humble attempt he failed; for he was one

of those unfortunate persons, who could never learn any thing; and though he had effectually contrived to throw off every vestige of the real gentleman, he had not been able to catch the real *downright* fashionable cant, but which he was continually attempting; rendering himself as much an object of ridicule to those he wished to imitate, as to those who beheld with disgust the prevalence of a mode, which must daily gain ground, because it supercedes the necessity of either sense, manners, or education. Vulgarities and folly will never want votaries; for they require nothing but obedience to their dictates. Mr. Irby was one of their most willing slaves. He was possessed of considerable property, and from an early age had been entirely his own master; for his mother never attempted to controul him. Before the rage for becoming a man of fashion had seized him,

he had fancied himself violently in love with Honoria, and had made her an offer of his hand, which she had declined without hesitation. This he had never forgiven, nor ever lost an opportunity of saying any thing he thought would annoy her : but he was an object so totally insignificant in her eyes, that his efforts to make himself of consequence were generally lost on her, and only excited her mirth. His brother was a person of a very different description ; he was very amiable, and generally entertaining ; invariably ready to oblige, and sound in heart and principle. He was romantic, and attempted to *poetize*, but was fonder of quoting others ; and had *shreds* of poetry at command, which he often introduced with apposite and ready wit. He was quite as much inclined as his brother had been to acknowledge Honoria's power, but her total indifference, and the ridicule with which

she treated the slightest hint of his sentiments, prevented their attaining strength enough to make him very unhappy.

Miss Irby was an every-day Miss in her teens, just beginning to look out for an establishment; rather pretty, and an indefatigable manufacturer of card-racks, boxes, screens, &c. to the formation of which she devoted the greatest portion of her time. She had been rather displeased, and much surprised at Miss Valency's monopoly of Major Burlington, during the former part of the evening; but as he afterwards paid her some compliment on her singing, sat next to her at supper, and never once expressed any solicitude as to the cause of Miss Valency's absence, she forgave the latter, and declared the Major to be a very charming man. Nor would she give any credit to her mother's asseveration on their return home, that Miss Valen-

cy and Major Burlington had certainly had a quarrel, which was the reason she had left the company in that *odd* sort of way, and she (Mrs Irby) had no doubt that the Major wanted Miss Valency to give up Sir Francis, and accept of him as a lover : *indeed* she was quite certain of it, from the observation she had made that evening.

To give up Sir Francis was now indeed Miss Valency's first wish, and the hours which she spent in solitude she devoted to the consideration of how she could best effect a step she was determined on. She must acquaint him with the real motive of the change in her resolution ; and she dreaded exciting his suspicions that Major Burlington was her informer ; and thereby, exciting him, perhaps to demand an explanation of the Major. But were she to tell him Miss Melville was at Weymouth, that she had been introduced to her, and remind

him of the name he had shewn her, he might infer that her own conclusions had pretty well acquainted her with the truth.

After pondering on the subject for some time, she sat down to write to Sir Francis, but had finished only the first side, when her mother and sister joined her; the latter slept in the same apartment with her, and Mrs. Valency came in great anxiety to learn the cause of her increased uneasiness. This she was soon made acquainted with, and agreed with her eldest daughter, that no alternative remained but to dissolve the connexion with Sir Francis; for Ella sincerely believed that his marriage with another would accelerate Miss Melville's death, which she dreaded was fast approaching; and nothing could have induced her to espouse a man, the living sacrifice of whose villany she had beheld in so interesting a form.

Mrs. Valency was anxious to make her own observations on Miss Melville's appearance; it was no difficult matter to form an acquaintance with her mother; they were strangers at Weymouth, and would probably be glad to meet with any body disposed to shew them attention. Mrs. Valency said, she would the next day inquire of Major Burlington, if he thought society would be agreeable to his friends, and he most likely would escort her to their abode.

She advised Ella not to finish her letter till the next day, which the latter agreed to, recollecting that after her mother had visited Mrs. Melville, she might acquaint Sir Francis that they had formed an acquaintance with that lady. He might thus be deterred from hastening back to Weymouth, which she apprehended he would do on the receipt of an epistle, of a tenor so wholly unexpected. To see Sir

Francis under such circumstances was what she most particularly wished to avoid: she could not think of the man she had for some time considered as her future husband, without a severe pang: she felt in relinquishing him a painful void in her heart; and, though she did not hesitate in her duty, she was conscious that she must be unhappy, till reason and reflection had reconciled her to what she knew to be right.

CHAPTER VII.

O'er whose pale lip the vital breath
Comes faint and chill, like the damp of death.

MISS HOLFORD.

THE next morning, at breakfast, Mrs. Valency informed the Admiral of all that had transpired on the preceding evening, and provoked him to utter something more than a monosyllable, to which he had obstinately confined himself, from the time he had heard of the invitation to Major Burlington. He now again inveighed in violent terms against the Major, as being the author of all the present perplexity. He declared it was the

very height of absurdity, to set it down as a fact, that Miss Melville was dying for Sir Francis, because she happened to be unwell, and come to Weymouth for her health; and that if Ella wrote a dismissal to Sir Francis on so trifling a pretext, she would incur his severest and permanent displeasure.

On being reminded of Sir Francis's duplicity, in having asserted that the lady, whose letters he had shewn Ella, was no more, the Admiral said, he had no doubt Sir Francis had spoken the truth, and that this was some other Miss Melville: however, he offered no objection to Mrs. Valency calling on Mrs. Melville; but, on the contrary, rather approved of it, and said he was determined to accompany her himself, and trust to his *own* observation; and not be imposed on by a dismal story about the wretchedness apparent in Miss Melville's looks, voice, and man-

ner, which the force of their imaginations would persuade them they discerned.

Accordingly, he, with Mrs. Valency and Honoria, escorted by Major Burlington, repaired to Mrs. Melville's lodgings. She was at home, and her daughter also was visible, nor did the latter seem averse to conversation, but displayed much courtesy towards the guests ; and, by her gentle and conciliating manner, increased the prepossession her interesting, though no longer lovely, person inspired. Mrs. Melville was merely her daughter's echo ; she appealed to her on all occasions, saw with her eyes, heard with her ears, and understood with her understanding ; and, was so completely wrapped up in her, that when she was out of sight, she could speak of no other object. Mrs. Valency was glad to perceive that Miss Melville's appearance was

less indicative of wretchedness than Ella had represented it, though she certainly looked extremely out of health; for her cheeks were colourless, and her eyes sunken.

The Admiral scanned her with an inquisitive gaze; he could not help admitting that she looked ill, and sometimes checked a sigh, but thought that otherwise her spirits seemed tolerably good. However, he resolved to make a formidable effort to discover her real feelings; and, as they were discoursing on various trifling subjects connected with the place, as the walks, public places, &c. he suddenly observed, that the ladies had lost their chief beau in the absence of Sir Francis Heathcote, but that he would speedily return.

A dead pause succeeded this observation: it lasted but a few moments; for Major Burlington, by some common place remark, endeavoured

to aid the embarrassment that seemed extended over the party, and which had its source in the expression of Mrs. Melville's countenance ; which was literally aghast, as her eyes fell upon her daughter, and she seemed entirely to have forgotten that any one else was present. Miss Melville's features did not immediately betray any particular emotion, and the Admiral watched in vain for the mantling blood, which he expected would have suffused it. But the whole form at that moment looked absolutely bloodless ; her mouth opened a little, and she breathed with difficulty for the space of a minute, when an universal trembling seized her ; and, rising precipitately, she tottered out of the room, faintly articulating, " A little giddiness —— excuse me —— often thus." Her mother, without waiting to apologize, hurried after her. Mrs. Valency immediately arose ; and, with

some severity in her voice, said to the Admiral—

“ *Now*, Sir, I suppose you are ready to go.”

He made no reply, but followed her out of the house; and, on their way home, lingered behind with the Major, whom he now addressed with great cordiality. They were out of hearing, and Mrs. Valency, with an unequal voice, said to Honoria, “That poor girl!—just as she was conversing so cheerfully too, and had exerted herself to overcome her feelings—to have them so suddenly, so painfully assailed—to be told that the unworthy man, whose name I doubt not struck a panic to her heart, would speedily be in the same place with her—O! it was barbarous! I cannot forgive the Admiral.”

Honoria brushed her hand hastily across her eyes, but she did not speak; for she was so much affected at the

thoughts of the unhappy young lady's sufferings, that her heart was quite full. The Major wished them good morning at the door of their house, and in silence they all ascended to the drawing room, where Ella was most anxiously awaiting their return, but had hardly expected to see them so soon.

The moment they entered, she was convinced something particular had occurred, and she interrogated them with her eyes, though she spoke not. But though all understood her, no one seemed inclined to answer, and all but the Admiral seated themselves in profound silence, while a species of dismay hung on the features of each individual. Mrs. Valency could not, at that moment, so far overcome the resentment she experienced against the Admiral, as to relate what had happened, in terms that would have been agreeable to his ears; therefore, while he continued present, she bri-

dled her tongue. He seemed inclined to put her self-command to the test; for he betrayed no intention of quitting the apartment, which he was traversing with rapid strides, and making the most hideous faces, by which he always indicated when his mind was agitated, as well as by turning quickly round before he had reached the extremity of the room, as if he fancied himself confined to the limits of a quarter deck, where some obstruction interrupted his progress beyond a certain distance. Honoria, who thought the scene did not appear likely to terminate, made a sign to her sister to leave the room with her, in order to put a period to her suspense; but, at that moment, the Admiral stopped before Ella; and, after various frightful contortions of his features he said, in a voice that seemed impelled by a degree of strength, gathered by long suppression,

“ Sir Francis Heathcote is a scoundrel! go, finish your letter to him, and let it be the last you ever write to a man who is a disgrace to his sex.”

The ladies quitted the room together, and the Admiral continued a soliloquy, which amounted to something very like a funeral oration over his friendship for Sir Francis. His heart was not proof against the sight of Miss Melville's disorder, so evidently excited by the allusion to the Baronet; the old gentleman was really terrified at the consequence of what he had said, and reproached himself severely for having wantonly wounded the afflicted heart, which he no longer doubted was devoted to Sir Francis. His feelings once thoroughly aroused, he became open to conviction, and gave implicit credit to every thing Major Burlington had asserted; he was angry with himself, and felt that atone-

ment was due somewhere, and commenced the task of reparation, by seizing the first opportunity of conciliating the Major, to whom his politeness was so much in arrears. Having insisted on his dining with him, he felt in better humour with himself, and he returned home meditating, with some embarrassment on how he should at once acknowledge the total change of his sentiments in regard to Sir Francis; and, after a violent struggle between reluctance to own, even by implication, that he had been wrong, and a desire to confess that he yielded to conviction, he at length avowed his opinion in the very *forcible* language in which he addressed Ella.

She was soon informed of the unpleasant cause which had so abruptly terminated their visit to Mrs. Melville, and extremely regretted what the Admiral had said; as, independent of the effect it had on Miss Melville, she

feared that the apprehension of Sir Francis's return would lead her to quit Weymouth precipitately; thus she would be deprived of the benefit she might perhaps have derived from a residence there; and the hurry and agitation of her departure, under such circumstances, might even prove fatal to her; while, after all, Sir Francis would probably not again repair to Weymouth. Ella's first wish, now, was to console, and impart comfort to Miss Melville, and she thought if she could succeed in so doing, it would be the most effectual means of banishing the impression of her own disappointment. But how to remove the barrier which caution and reserve places between new acquaintances, or at once attain that degree of familiar intercourse, by which alone Miss Melville could derive any pleasure from her society, was difficult to determine.

Mrs. Valency represented Mrs. Melville as a character apparently very easy of access; and Ella and her mother agreed that they would, in the course of the evening, call at Mrs. Melville's door to inquire after her daughter, when they might perhaps be admitted, and circumstances turn out so as to produce a rapid intimacy, which the lively anxiety they experienced, respecting Miss Melville, rendered probable. In the meantime Ella completed the following letter to Sir Francis, without having blotted it with her tears, though many a painful sigh heaved her breast, and the gloomy cast of disappointment shaded her features.

LETTER.

“To address you in the manner I am compelled to is truly repugnant to my feelings, more particularly because I am aware that the tenor of

my letter will be so wholly unexpected, as to give additional asperity to every sentence. Disappointment, so unlooked for, at the very time when hope and anticipation are at their height, is in itself one of the severest punishments that can be inflicted. I candidly own, if it can be any consolation to you, that I participate in those sensations; but I bless heaven they are not aggravated by the consciousness of being merited; but I could no longer make that boast, were I (in order to evade present uneasiness) voluntarily to turn from the only path, which with propriety I can now pursue. I will no longer keep you in suspense; but, trusting I have in a measure prepared you for the subsequent communication, I shall enter on it without farther preface. Perhaps I need only tell you that we have formed an acquaintance with a Mrs. and Miss Melville, (who arrived here the day

after you left us) to excite a suspicion of all that I would say! The name of *Elizabeth Melville*; which I perfectly recollected as the signature of some letters you somewhat imprudently submitted to my inspection, instantly struck me, and the emotion she betrayed on hearing Sir Francis Heathcote mentioned, proved but too plainly she did not think of him as he deserved. I will not dwell on this delicate subject; it will be sufficient to say Miss Melville appears to me to be in a dying state. I may be mistaken; but I know I would rather die myself than be a party in any act that might accelerate her fate. But herein I am by no means disinterested; for I should think I well deserved all the misery that would doubtless ensue, could I be tempted to intrust my peace to the charge of one who had proved so wholly regardless of that happiness which was dependent upon

him. I have not scrupled often to confess to you, that I entertained no very favourable opinion of you in the early stages of our acquaintance, from the character of vanity and inconstancy, which I had heard imputed to you. But the unquestionable manner in which you conducted yourself, in regard to the alliance you sought with my family, induced me to disregard the former reports to your disadvantage, and to conclude that the imprudence or forwardness of some of my own sex, had afforded a good excuse for the indulgence of your vanity at their expense. How differently should I have considered the subject—how differently should I have acted, could I for a moment have imagined you to be one of those selfish, unfeeling, unprincipled men, whom I have ever held in such peculiar abhorrence: who seek the affections of the young and inexperienced, only to

abuse them, and endeavour to excite the tenderest emotions of the heart, only to torture them as the sacrifice to vanity. I know not how you can soften the picture so as to contemplate it with complacency, but I know that in my estimation, there are very few crimes of a deeper dye than that I am alluding to; nay, that many which are punished in obedience to the laws by exile, ignominy, and even death, are productive of less evil consequences, and instigated by much more pardonable motives. My language may be strong, but I assure you it is merely expressive of my feelings. At that early age, when the softer sensations are romantically alive, and fix with enthusiasm on an object calculated to excite them, and who eagerly seeks to awaken them—hope, anticipation, confidence, unchecked by experience, nurses and encourages love, till it it may be said to engross

the whole soul. Reason, almost in a state of infancy, has gained no ascendancy, nor offers a single check to the unbounded sway of the master passion. *Then*, more than at any other period of existence, does disappointment inflict the severest wound, and treachery sting with the sharpest acuteness. What does that man deserve who premeditatedly engenders this misery by a series of studied efforts to render himself beloved? Affairs of the heart, in the language of the world, are lightly treated, laughed at, and generally considered as of little consequence, and transient in their effects; but ask the person who has arrived at old age, and who in their youth experienced a disappointment in their affections, if ever, at any subsequent period, under all the variety of trials they may have endured in the course of a long life, they suffered wretchedness so severe, so un-

qualified, so hopeless, as that they sustained from the abuse of their first affections; when they had no mental strength to oppose to overwhelming misery, but rather gloried in encouraging than combating it.

“The gay hilarity of youth, and the pleasurable sensations peculiar to their age, sunk in the tide of anguish every minutiae, which in more advanced life we should scorn to recal, dwelt on to agony, till all those years in which we experience the most vivid, though not the most solid enjoyment of existence, are consumed in endless repinings, that cast a gloom on every future scene. You would talk with horror of the tyrant who could inflict tortures on the body, which are comparatively brief in their duration, and speedily terminate with life; yet *you*—yes *you*, could impose months, and *years*, of protracted torture, both of body and mind, pro-

ductive of a lingering death, and progressive decay of nature, unable to sustain so strong a conflict.

“ Thank heaven, I have now attained the age when reason has the mastery ; at four and twenty we know how to struggle with our feelings, and compel them to take a right course. Had my present perplexity, nay I will admit, *disappointment*, fallen on me at sixteen or seventeen, the age at which I conclude Miss M—’s acquaintance with you commenced, I should have felt very differently, and perhaps sunk, like her, under my misfortune ; though certainly not to be compared in magnitude to her’s. May heaven restore her health, and spare you the compunction her death must inflict ; she shall henceforth be my chosen friend, and if I can prevail, my frequent companion. After what I have now said, and which I devoutly hope may influence your future conduct in regard

to my sex, it is needless to repeat a resolution I solemnly affirm to be irrevocable—we never meet again but as distant acquaintances. Do not attempt to seek me, for I will not subject myself to the distress of an interview; your presence or expostulations will never alter my determination; and all I request of you is to spare me any importunity, as my sincere wish is never either to see or hear from you again. Do not accuse me of cruelty, or want of feeling, but let every pang you may experience on this occasion, remind you that you have inflicted far superior misery *perhaps* on a variety of persons, and that *one* you have afflicted, “even unto *death*.” I have only to add, that my friends entirely approve of the step I have taken,”

Ella felt a weight removed from her mind when she had finished this letter, though still her heart was far

from light; and had she yielded to the sensation that oppressed her, she would have resigned herself to sorrow and regret. But every murmur that arose she checked by the recollection that there was in reality nothing to lament in the loss of such a man as Sir Francis Heathcote; and could she but bring herself to consider the subject in its true light, she would only find a cause of rejoicing in the dissolution of such a connexion.

She was not sorry that Major Burlington was expected to dine with them, as the presence of a guest would greatly tend to dissipate the gloom that was likely to pervade the family party, under the present circumstances; and she felt herself particularly stimulated to overcome any semblance of dejection, which she believed the Major would not hesitate to lay to the charge of Sir Francis. Ella appeared at dinner with a serene

though not a smiling countenance; her mother and sister, instead of encouraging the unhappiness, they knew she must experience, by any display of sympathy, exerted themselves to support a cheerful aspect, and thus greatly aided her in the performance of the task she had undertaken. The Admiral, too, seemed eager to convince the Major he *could* be agreeable; and was also anxious to do away the lurking disapprobation he perceived in Mrs. Valency's manner towards him. Major Burlington was *habitually* pleasant, and he had no occasion to make any *effort*, in order to conform his demeanour to the cast of the company. In alluding to their kindness to him during his illness, he said that he was now almost inclined to quarrel with them for making him well so soon, as he had no longer an excuse for remaining at Weymouth, which he should leave with great re-

gret. Mrs. Valency advised him not to think of travelling for some time ; to which he replied, he believed he should yet remain a few days, unless indeed she should banish him her house, when he doubted not he should find himself strong enough to set off immediately. The Admiral observed, they should do wisely in adopting such a measure, as they should then be less sensible of the loss they should sustain, when the Major should leave them after having been for some time longer a member of their society.

This mutual *politesse* was productive of mutual complacency, which rendered the parties every moment better pleased with each other. The ladies retired with regret, but the Admiral rejoiced when their absence gave him an opportunity of entering on a subject he was very anxious to introduce. He entertained strong apprehensions that the Major imagined

Sir Francis had (as the Admiral expressed it) been *playing the fool* with one or other of his nieces. This, the old gentleman conceived, would reflect great disgrace on him, who considered himself their protector; and who, old as he was, would not have hesitated to have compelled any one who he thought had behaved with impropriety towards them, to answer for his conduct with his life. He dreaded also that the world in general would be inclined to cast some reflection on him, when they found that the match was broken off; and, judging by Sir Francis's well known character of inconstancy, impute it to his caprice: the Admiral, therefore, resolved to make no secret of the leading circumstances of the case. In regard to Major Burlington, he felt rather called on to be unreserved, as by him the real character of Sir Francis had been unveiled to them. He

opened the subject rather abruptly with an eulogy on Miss Valency ; observing, that she had displayed a magnanimity, and self command, that had more than ever endeared her to him. He then entered into the particulars of Sir Francis's attachment to her, and dwelt on the very open and honorable manner in which the Baronet had explained himself ; and added, that the marriage was to have taken place immediately on their return home ; and yet Miss Valency, with a resoluteness which did her the highest honour, had no sooner been aware of Sir Francis's real character, than she had at once determined to break off the connexion, and had already done so by letter.

“ And what more particularly enhances the sacrifice,” continued the Admiral, “ is, that my niece certainly was sincerely attached to Sir Francis ; otherwise I never should have con-

sented to her espousing him, and the fortitude with which she bears her disappointment is indeed truly admirable."

The Major was silent and thoughtful for a few minutes ; he was reflecting, that had he known Sir Francis was indeed serious in his addresses to Miss Valency, he should have scrupled very much to have interfered on the subject : but he soon became satisfied with what he had done, and said,

" I cannot regret that I was the means of discovering to Miss Valency Sir Francis's real character ; for though *she* has no reason to impeach his constancy, and this grand foible in his disposition might have been cured by an union with her, I think that in other respects he was not a man who could have made *such* a woman happy."

" I think," returned the Admiral,

“ that she is for ever indebted to you. I have seen enough to convince me he is a man without feeling, honour, or principle ! I am not scrupulous about love affairs, which generally turn out to be nothing but a combination of nonsense, made up of coquetry on one side, and credulity on the other ; but, when they come to involve people’s happiness, and perhaps even their *lives*, they deserve to be considered in a very serious light.”

“ I candidly own,” said the Major, “ that of all-men existing, Sir Francis is he whom I like least ; but, as there has never been any dissension between us, which could furnish an excuse for an open rupture, I have always continued on the footing of an acquaintance with him, as I don’t want to insult him. But, my brother, whose lofty, independent spirit, will not curb itself even to *appear* civil to a man he despises, never

troubles himself to conceal what he thinks of Sir Francis ; and is, I dare say, an object of detestation in his eyes, though Sir Francis affects to wish to be on good terms with him ; and, if their eyes chance to encounter, he has always a bow ready for him—but there is a something in Spencer that excites respect and deference, in even his greatest enemies, and every man who aspires to respectability, wishes to claim him as a friend.”

“ You are not at all *fond* of this brother of yours,” said the Admiral, laughing.

“ Spencer Burlington is the first man living in his brother’s estimation, I assure you,” rejoined the Major, in a tone of enthusiasm, springing from the warmth of natural affection.

CHAPTER VIII.

What though my cheeks thy pallid liv'ry wear,
And each enfeebled nerve thy power obeys!
Though hourly doom'd thy chilling grasp to bear,
I shiver in the summer's noontide blaze!

Yet will I welcome thy chastising hand,
Since thou hast left my mind her wonted pow'rs;
Since reason still maintains her high command,
And sportive fancy gilds my lonely hours.

MARIA LOGAN.

WHILE this conversation was passing between the gentlemen, Mrs. Valency and Ella pursued the way to Mrs. Melville's lodgings. Arrived there, they sent up an inquiry after Miss Melville, when her mother came running down stairs, and insisted on their

coming in, and expressed her gratitude for their solicitude in regard to her daughter, who, she assured them, was better. Poor Mrs. Melville was just in that state, in which we are most desirous of unburthening our hearts to some sympathizing ear, and when the sight of a commiserating countenance is most welcome. She had been secluded in her daughter's chamber since the morning, and employed all that time in talking over the most disagreeable subjects; for *talk* she must, let her be where she would; nor, in her habitual volubility, could she ever retain any thing long within her bosom.

She was the worst person in the world to assist her daughter in the effort she had long been attempting to overcome her feelings, and in endeavouring to get the better of that, which her maturer reason convinced her was a weakness. But her mother, by an

injudicious sympathy in feeling, she thought natural in her situation, and by continually reverting to scenes which her child wishes to obliterate from her memory, renewed the remembrance of the past, and aroused all those sensations connected with it, while she thought she was only concurring in all her daughter's ideas on the subject. Miss Melville had very seriously entreated her on that day never again to make Sir Francis the theme of their conversation in her presence, and to this she most readily agreed ; nor was she likely to transgress when once convinced it was unpleasant to her daughter, as her whole aim was to act agreeably to her feelings. But scarcely were Mrs. Valency and Ella seated, when she expressed her regret that she should not be able to extend her stay at Weymouth to the time she had first in-

tended ; indeed , she believed they should depart in a few days for— for——”

Mrs. Melville was longing to *tell*, but conscious that she ought to retain what she would say, Mrs. Valency expressed her regret at the probability of her departure, and added, “ every body is leaving Weymouth ; I think Sir Francis Heathcote, an agreeable acquaintance of ours, went only a few day ago, and I do not think there is a probability of his returning,”

“ Really,” cried Mrs. Melville, with quickness, “ *then* indeed *that* alters the case. Certainly I should not wish on any account to leave Weymouth if we could avoid it ; but, the truth is, my dear Madam, Sir Francis is an old suitor of my daughter, she rejected him, and since *that* her feelings on the subject are so delicate, that she cannot endure the idea of meeting him, as

of course it would be very mortifying to Sir Francis, and had better on all accounts be avoided."

"Certainly, and perhaps Sir Francis would feel uncomfortable."

"O I am sure it would be the last thing in the world he would desire,"—interrupted Mrs. Melville—"if he only knew we were here I should not have the smallest apprehension of his returning."

"Then I think you may feel perfectly satisfied; for I know a person who corresponds with Sir Francis, and who has already informed him that you *are* here."

Oh dear! I am very glad indeed; quite delighted; and Elizabeth, and dear good Mr. Grantly, will be so glad that we may stay here in comfort."

Mrs. Valency having now said all that she wished in regard to Sir Francis, and who did not like to encourage the loquacious lady to dis-

course on what she might perhaps afterwards regret having mentioned, rose to depart ; but Mrs. Melville entreated her to remain, till she told her daughter they were there, adding that she was sure the intelligence she had to communicate to her would make her a great deal better ; but the thoughts of hurrying off again directly had quite overset her.

Ella seemed inclined to stay, and Mrs. Valency yielded to the good lady's vociferous entreaties, and though not many minutes elapsed before she re-appeared, she contrived in that time to repeat to her daughter, every thing that Mrs. Valency had said. It was a source of real consolation to Elizabeth, who now resolved to lose no opportunity of combating with her feelings, and Ella was both surprised and pleased to see her enter the room. Miss Valency only followed the dictates of her heart, in making herself

fascinating in the eyes of Elizabeth, who was quite charmed with her, and thought she had never seen a person whom she could so readily admit to her confidence. She blamed herself for the unfavourable opinion she had been inclined to form of Miss Valency the first time she had seen her, and perhaps there never was a more rapid advance made towards a future intimacy in one visit, than on this occasion.

Ella felt much less unhappy after she had seen Miss Melville; for she was persuaded that she was not so much reduced in strength as her looks denoted, and she judged rightly. Constant anxiety, and the frequent return of indisposition, had blanched Elizabeth's complexion, and robbed her form of the plumpness of youth; but her constitution still resisted the repeated attacks that had been made on it, and having once surmounted the se-

vere trial she had sustained in resolving to resign Sir Francis, she had gradually regained strength. Hope was extinguished, suspense terminated, and she had nothing to do but calmly endure ; and *that* she trusted only for a time ; for reason having once gained the ascendancy, she found her unhappiness decrease at every effort she made to overcome it. She had readily agreed to her mother's proposal of repairing to Weymouth, and the change of air and scene had the happiest effect on her spirits, and she was just regaining the power of enjoyment, when the unfortunate mention of Sir Francis, and the report that he was about to return to Weymouth, struck a chill through all her veins, and she vainly attempted to recover the shock, and conceal her dismay. Yet she might not have been so wholly unsuccessful had it not been for her mother's affrighted aspect, which she was certain

must be apparent to all present, and *that* idea completed her distress. Her mother had no sooner been alone with her, than she had proposed quitting Weymouth directly. Elizabeth felt that she had not yet attained that state of mind in regard to Sir Francis, which would permit her to expose herself to the chance of meeting him; she said she would reflect on what was best to be done, and for some hours all her unhappiness returned, as she thought that this unworthy man was doomed, like an evil spirit, to cross her path continually, and interrupt all her plans of comfort. But her second interview with the Valency family convinced her she had been causelessly alarmed, as she felt certain the Baronet would not run the risk of meeting her, for she was not aware of any extraordinary cause that might tempt him to return to Weymouth.

She now again resigned herself to

the anticipation of peace, and ventured to hope her acquaintance with Mrs. Valency's family might be productive of pleasure. Of that she was the more assured, when they, the next day, called for her in the carriage to take her an airing; and the whole time she was out with them, they exerted themselves to entertain her, not only by their lively conversation, but by taking her from place to place, to shew her every thing calculated to amuse her. They were amply rewarded by perceiving a faint tinge on her cheek, and a smile of complacency playing round her mouth. She, and her mother, were invited to spend the ensuing day at Mrs. Valency's, and the Admiral, having called on Mr. Grantly, requested him to meet them. Major Burlington and the two Irby's were also to be of the party.

CHAPTER IX.

“ More, more!” the glutton cries for something
new—

So rages appetite ; if man can't mount,
He will descend.

YOUNG.

ELLA derived all the consolation she expected from an intimacy with Miss Melville, and when an uneasy sensation arose in her breast she would think of the sufferings of Elizabeth, and her own would appear trifling by comparison. And while reflecting on how she had acted, self-complacency soon gained the ascendancy over every other feeling, and inclined her to contentment.

The return of the post brought not any answer from Sir Francis, and she flattered herself he would obey her injunction, and that she should hear of him no more; and, assured that the severity of her trial was over, she prepared for the dinner party on that day in tolerable spirits. When they were assembled in the drawing room before dinner, Jonathan Irby, after staring with a vacant grin for some time at Miss Melville, came up to Honoria, who was seated at a distance from her, and said, in rather a lower tone than he generally spoke in,

“Where in the world did you pick up that unfortunate piece of skin and grief.”

This witty allusion to Miss Melville was followed by a loud laugh from the *profound* speaker, to whom Honoria did not vouchsafe an answer. His brother, who was sitting next to her, did not notice Jonathan's speech;

but, casting a pensive glance on Miss Melville, he repeated as if to himself,

“Gone was her summer rose, by grief consum’d,
But yet remain’d to point where once it bloom’d;
Some remnant by the vengeful spoiler left,
Who robb’d, as if repentant of the theft.”

“Te dum, te dum, te dy, te dum te dum,” cried Jonathan, provoked at the approving glance he saw Honoria cast on his brother. “William, I say,” he continued, “You certainly were intended for a stage player! that poor *lackadazical* Miss, that looks as if she had been fined down to run a race, would make a nice tragedy queen for you.”

“Pray, Mr. Irby,” said Honoria, choose some fitter subject to exercise your wit upon, and don’t prove yourself as unfeeling as ridiculous.”

“Well done, Miss Honoria!” cried Jonathan, rudely clapping his hands. “At it again! that was well spoken. back her up Mr. Stage-player; at it

again, I say." He finished this elegant speech by hissing, as if he had been setting on two dogs to fight; but he was suddenly silenced by perceiving Major Burlington close to him, regarding him with fixed attention and amazement. Jonathan affected to laugh, but looked more silly than usual; and still more so when the Major said, with a look of mock reverence,

"Pray go on, Sir, I am all anxiety to profit by your eloquence."

"Jonathan turned off with a very sheepish look, as his brother, affecting an air of abstraction, repeated—

"Hiding his quiver in a flowery coil.

Demure, with lip just curved, and flashing eye

Wrapped in a cloak the vulgar guess to foil.

Behold the subtile archer Irony."*

Major Burlington bowed as if taking this to himself; and smiling good humouredly, said—"No less apposite to the occasion than elegantly express-

* M. F. Johnson.

ed! may I ask if the lines are your own?" —“ O no, indeed! I wish they were,” returned William, “ I sometimes poetize from morning to night, and from night till morning, when I am romantically inclined : but I rarely produce any thing worthy of being sported off on an apt occasion ; so, without the least scruple, I appropriate the wit and genius of others to my own purposes.”

Nothing very particular occurred during dinner, unless indeed the enormous quantity of food Jonathan devoured, deserves, like other phenomena, to be recorded. He was both a *gourmand* and an epicure, and as fastidious about the quality of what he ate, as intemperate in the quantity. He thought it essential to the character he wished to support, to affect some knowledge in the culinary art, as he had heard several young men display their oratory on that most ani-

mating theme, and prove themselves connoisseurs; and so anxious was Jonathan to emulate their bright example, that he had often been heard to boast, that the cookery book was the only one he ever opened. However delicately his food was prepared, he was sure to find out that it wanted something, no matter at whose table he was feasting; he would lament very pathetically the absence of the one thing wanting. The stewed carp on this occasion, though rendered luscious by a profusion of all the customary ingredients to tempt the palate, he declared was quite a different thing with a little of the *sauce epicurienné* added to it; and the *sauce epicurienné* was reverted to, every time he sent his plate to be replenished with the carp, which *three* times answered his demands upon it; when he attacked a sirloin of beef, and heaped his plate with pickles, horseradish, mustard, and

celery, but observed it was good for nothing without walnut pickle.

When the ladies retired, Mrs. Melville begged to be informed, who that gentleman was, that had such a wonderful appetite. Mrs. Valency satisfied her on that head, and added, " Mrs. Irby is our nearest neighbour in the country, and we have always been on very friendly terms. Her youngest son is a very pleasing young man, and her daughter tolerably accomplished ; and, for their sakes, we must sometimes support the society of Mr. Irby, who is a description of person I never desire to see in my house ; for he prides himself on being vulgar, and I never yet found him entertaining ; but I dare say he has a very good heart."

" Oh ! of *course* we must give him credit for that," said Honoria ; " but really I have not goodnature enough to tolerate his company."

“ Fortunately we have not much of it,” said Ella; “ for when he grows quite insufferable, my uncle gives him a severereprimand, which silences him at once, and he sometimes stays away for a month together.”

“ Yes, but he is sure to come again without standing on the ceremony of waiting for an invitation. It is no easy task to get rid of the acquaintance of such a man : I wish he would take a lesson from the mild gentlemanlike manner of Major Burlington.”

Honorina had brought the Major on the tapis, and all seemed ready to join in his praise ; but Mrs. and Miss Melville agreed that he was not near so handsome as his brother.

“ But,” continued Mrs. Melville, “ he has no pride about him, nothing of the coxcomb ; and we cannot say as much for Mr. Spencer Burlington.”

“ Why I don’t know,” said her daughter ; “ we have seen very little of

him since he was a youth; for some years he has rarely visited us: for, though his estate lies in our neighbourhood, he has not been much at it."

"And when he is there," rejoined Mrs. Melville, "he does not trouble us with much of his company; and you know we have heard enough of the airs he gives himself."

"Yes, but Mr. Grantly will not allow that charge to be just; though indeed I should not wonder at Mr. Burlington being vain or conceited; for there is such a fuss made about him by all the ladies in the county."

Ella was not at a loss to guess from whom Mrs. Melville had heard the report to Mr. Burlington's disadvantage, and she concluded that gentleman had declined visiting at Mrs. Melville's, from his averseness to meeting Sir Francis. On Mrs. Melville's mentioning the town where she resided, it appeared that it was not more than thirty

miles from the abode of Mrs. Valency.

When the gentlemen rejoined the party, Honoria got as far as she could from her aversion, Jonathan; but he, aware of her design, contrived to get round behind her; and, leaning on the back of her chair, continued jogging it on purpose. She moved close to the edge, when he cried out,

“ I am not going to bite you, you need not *wince* so; come,” he continued, leaning quite over the chair, and lowering his tone, “ come, now don’t be so cruel.”

Honoria instantly arose, and joined her sister and Miss Melville, who were standing near the window; but her persecutor, whose only view was to torment her, immediately followed, and asked her to lend him a smelling bottle, for that the heat of the room made him quite sick. Honoria did not comply with his request, but advised him,

by all means, to leave the room; adding, "you had better go home, and retire to rest: I dare say you will be very well to-morrow."

"No, I thank you, I am not so easily got rid of," he returned, with a grin; but she now contrived to get behind her sister, and was in a measure defended from his attack, though he still continued importuning her for the smelling bottle, which she resolutely refused, knowing he only wanted to keep it on purpose to plague her, and she privately slid it into the hands of Miss Melville, that she might with truth aver she had it not; but as even this assurance could not silence the drawling repetition of, "well give me the scent bottle then I say;" she no longer replied to him.

Tea over, the Admiral, Mrs. Melville, Mrs. Valency, and Mr. Grantly, formed a whist party: Major Burlington and William Irby were anx-

ious for music, and the young ladies were very ready to gratify them ; but Jonathan called out for a round game, adding, “ Hang it, I see no fun in tweedle dum and tweedle dee for a whole evening.”

“ Well, then,” said Miss Valency, “ suppose we have a little music first, and then a round game.”

“ Very well,” said Jonathan, and continued to Honoria, who was tuning her harp ; “ but pray let us have something better than *twang twang*.”

The harmony commenced, but Jonathan talked so loud, close to the performers, that nothing could be distinctly heard but his nonsense. The gentlemen entreated silence in vain, when Jonathan’s eyes accidentally fell on the smelling bottle, which Miss Melville had heedlessly laid down on the piano. He made a dart at it, grasped it with his large paw, and bore it off in triumph, holding it up above his

head, and attempting to caper, while his large boney form offered an apt comparison to a cart horse endeavouring to be frisky. His cry of "I've got it, I've got it, I've got it," was too boisterous to permit the music to proceed, and even startled the whist players, who were in a drawing room adjoining, the folding doors between being open. Honoria said not a word when she saw her property in the hands of Jonathan, as she knew it would only accelerate its fate; nor was she the least suprising, when, having got on the hearth, he let fall the bottle, and broke it to atoms on the marble.

"Lud have mercy upon us; I declare I have smashed it all to pieces," he cried out, affecting a sorrowful look. Major Burlington could not resist exclaiming, "This is really a shame;" while William in an angry voice, said, "Are you mad, Jonathan; I wish

from my soul you were a thousand miles off."

"I dare say you do, my buck! then you think you would have a better chance—*hey* Mr. Stageplayer."

Honorina made no comments whatever on the pretended accident; but, rising, said to her sister, "We had better attempt cards, for harmony seems quite out of the question."

They now sat down to a round game, and Major Burlington and William exerted themselves to promote hilarity, in order to do away the impression of Jonathan's conduct. He was now rather less troublesome, as his extreme anxiety, respecting the game, made him silent on every other subject, and his *declamation* was chiefly confined to soliloquies concerning the odds in favour or against such or such a card.

CHAPTER X.

Thou art no more my bosom friend,
Here must the sweet delusion end.

MRS. ROBINSON.

THEY had not been long seated, when a footman entered the room, and in a low voice informed Miss Valency, a person below wished to speak to her. She immediately arose, and had reached the door before it struck her that there was any thing extraordinary in this circumstance; when she suddenly thought of Sir Francis, and instantly stopped, and the alarmed glance she cast on Miss Melville, who was placidly attending to the game,

denoted her feelings. Honoria quickly defined them; for she had heard what the man had said, and was seized with apprehensions similar to her sister's. She followed her out of the room, and proposed questioning the servant; but he had ran downstairs, and Ella feared to pursue him, lest she should encounter *him* she most dreaded to behold.

“ I will go,” said Honoria, “ return to the drawing room, and don't let them suspect any thing is the matter. Good Heavens! if Miss Melville had the least idea of——”

“ O I tremble to think of it,” cried Ella.

“ Don't be so alarmed : be assured he will not attempt to come up, even should it indeed be him—pray endeavour to compose yourself; I dare say our fears are groundless.”

Honoria descended the stairs as her sister re-entered the drawing

room. The parlour door stood open, and certainly Honoria was not surprised, though much distressed, at beholding Sir Francis Heathcote. He was pacing the apartment in great agitation; as she entered, he turned round precipitately, and was evidently disappointed on finding it was not Ella. In a voice of ill-suppressed resentment he said—"I requested to speak to your sister."

"She is engaged at present," said Honoria, with some hesitation; for she felt it was not her business to address Sir Francis in peremptory language, or take upon her to say all that her sister might with propriety have expressed on the occasion.

"O, surely," resumed the Baronet, in a supplicating tone; "*you* are not totally devoid of compassion; *you* cannot behold my wretchedness with indifference? *You* will not refuse to intercede with your sister in my behalf! I

must and will see her ; for not another night will I endure the torments her injustice, her barbarity, has inflicted on me—she cannot refuse to listen to my defence ; go, Honoria, bid her descend !”

Honoria shook her head.

“ Nay,” continued he, indignation flashing from his eyes as he approached the door, “ then I will force myself into her presence ! I care not who sees my misery—I will compel her to do me justice.”

Honoria, greatly alarmed, laid her hand on his arm, and arrested his progress. “ Stop, stop,” she cried, in terrified accents ; “ pray recollect yourself ! You know not who is above—we have company ; and—and,—stay here but a few moments, and I will try what is to be done.”

Sir Francis knew perfectly well *who* was above ; for he had inquired of the servant, and had ascertained that

Mrs. and Miss Melville were of the party. He now trusted that the dread of his appearing before them, would induce Miss Valency to grant him an interview, which he had hoped to have surprised her into, by cautioning the servant not to tell who it was that requested to see her; and the man, suspecting the terms the Baronet was on, or rather *had been* on, in the family, concluded that an agreeable surprise was in store for his young lady. Sir Francis's design of terrifying Honoria, by denoting an intention of ascending to the drawing room, appeared to have succeeded, and he inferred from what she said, that she would prevail on her sister to descend; he therefore suffered her to leave him; but the furthest thing from Honoria's thoughts was to persuade her sister to expose herself to so unpleasant a scene. She was perfectly aware of the step most proper to be taken on the occasion, and

passing through the outer drawing room, she gave Ella a cheering glance, and repaired to where her uncle was engaged at the whist table. He was unfortunately in the act of dealing, and she dared not address him while he was distributing the cards, as she knew it would only put him in a passion, and he would not attend to a word she said; but the moment he had done, she whispered in his ear, that a gentleman was below who would not retire unless he spoke to him. "She dared not mention his name, as, the Admiral being a little deaf, it required her to speak in a key that might have been audible to his neighbour, who was Mrs. Melville; but Honoria thought he would guess who it was she alluded to; but he was deliberately sorting his cards, which seemed to engross his whole attention, and after twice repeating her words, she could get no other reply than "Don't child,

don't whisper in my ear so, you tickle me."

Again Honoria ventured to repeat what she had said in rather a higher tone. The Admiral was just playing to the first trick, and with his eyes still fixed on the cards, he said, "If all the kings of the earth were waiting for me I would not stir till this game is decided;" they were eight to nine. Honoria was distressed beyond measure, and in the most painful anxiety she watched the playing of every card, and many were withheld a tedious time ere the cautious player would venture to throw them out. But Mrs. Valency was not one of those: she saw by Honoria's countenance that something extraordinary was the matter, and not another thought could she give to the game. She trumped her partners best card, led to the adversary's renounce, and ended by revoking. The

Admiral was in a downright rage, and with the utmost difficulty confined his language within the bounds of politeness, during a lengthened animadversion on all the errors Mrs. Valency had committed.

Poor Honoria was almost in a fever of impatience; it was totally useless to address the Admiral at that moment; she could not remain in the same spot; and walked back to the other room, and kept hovering about the door, exciting the utmost alarm in Ella, who perceived the watchfulness of her looks, and could no longer doubt that Sir Francis was in the house. A man's foot was heard on the stairs—Honorina gasped for breath; but, laying her hand on the lock of the door, she contrived to bolt it, while she pretended to be endeavouring to open it. Some one from without attempted to enter.

“ Who is it ? ” cried Honoria :
“ something is the matter with the latch, I cannot open it.”

“ It is only I, ma’am,” returned the voice of the footman, “ here is a note for you.”

Major Burlington and William had both jumped up to assist Honoria, but she now opened the door herself, and took in the note. It was merely a piece of paper folded together, containing these words “ Honoria, I will follow you instantly, if your sister does not descend.” Honoria again applied her trembling hands to the lock, and affected to be endeavouring to ascertain what was the matter with it, and quickly rebolting it, hurried back to her uncle ; and, with increased dismay, perceived that the game was further than before from a termination, as the forfeiture of three tricks had reduced the probability of the Admiral’s winning, and Mrs. Valency had just

misdealt. Honoria seized the moment, and intreated her uncle to look at that paper, as she presented the lines Sir Francis had sent up, which from his knowledge of the hand were sufficient to enlighten the Admiral at once on the subject.

“What nonsense,” he cried; “I have not got my glasses, how can you bring me any thing to read at such a moment—see, ma’am,” he continued to Mrs. Melville, “you have very nearly lost your deal also; you have given two cards here—ah! an honour.”

Honoria stood all this time absolutely trembling; when, to her infinite relief, Mrs. Melville and her partner shewed honours, and the game was decided; but the Admiral was going to talk it over, if Mrs. Valency, as she dropped her cards, had not said “Pray Sir, attend to Honoria, she has something particular to say to you.”

“Well, child,” he said, as he rose,

and suffered her to draw him aside. "What have you been plaguing me about all this time? I really believe you made us lose the game."

"O Sir, I am terrified to death. Sir Francis is below, and threatens to come up."

Three monstrous strides brought the Admiral to the door, and three seconds beheld him in the presence of Sir Francis, who was a little confounded at the gigantic form, and distorted countenance, that presented itself, so complete a contrast to the figure he had expected to behold. The Admiral attempted several times to speak, ere he could succeed, for the violent workings of the muscles of his face seemed to affect his speech. Sir Francis seized the opportunity to begin first, and said with great emotion—

"I come here Admiral Valency to demand *justice*. I request only to be heard, and without reference to the

friendship you once did me the honour to profess for me, or the footing I was received on in this family, I consider myself entitled to be heard in my own defence, and in *her* presence, who has accused me, refute the vile calumnies that have been propagated to my dishonour."

Sir Francis—Sir—Sir—Sir Francis, allow me, allow me to speak! I have nothing—*we* have nothing—we none of us have any thing, to accuse you of in regard to your conduct towards Miss Valency.—No, towards my niece you have ever behaved with the strictest propriety. Had it been otherwise, *I* should have been to blame Sir Francis; not that I mean to take any credit to myself on this occasion! the open and honourable manner in which you preferred your addresses to Miss Valency, required no interference on my part."

"You acknowledge *that*, Sir, and

yet you permit me to be treated in this inhuman—this——

“ Allow me, allow me, Sir Francis, to finish what I was about to say ;—be so good as not to interrupt me—it is my wish to do you justice in every respect ; it was not by my desire that my niece first resolved on the step she has taken ;—but she brought forward such arguments in support of its propriety, as I conceived to be unanswerable. I do not wish to enter upon the subject, nor indeed to interfere at all. Miss Valency is the best judge of what she thinks likely to contribute to her happiness, I shall not endeavour to influence her in any way ; all that will remain for me to do, will be to shield her from every species of persecution. I am anxious to behave with all possible civility towards you, Sir Francis, and shall always be ready to acknowledge that you conducted yourself towards me and mine, as a man of ho-

nour, and I dare say, you will never compel me to retract my words."

" I have heard all you would say, Sir ; now permit me simply to state all that I request. Let Miss Valency hear my defence from my own lips ! let her allow me to explain what has been so grossly misrepresented.—Let me, as I swear to do, contradict every accusation contained in that horrible letter, which, with such studied barbarity, she addressed to me ; and then let her, if she chooses, banish me for ever ; I will no longer dispute her will ; but until I hear my sentence from her own lips, I will not cease persecuting her, and seeking the opportunity denied me. O, Admiral Valency ! is my demand unreasonable ? the basest criminal is not condemned unheard ! am I to be treated worse than the vilest upon earth ? You feel for me ; you cannot deny that I have been treated with unparalleled rigour ; if you have

ever loved, fancy what I must have endured when, in the zenith of confident hope, nay of assured felicity, I perused the wretched scrawl that proved that the woman I weakly fancied loved me tenderly, could voluntarily resign me, and without hesitation doom me to misery."

Sir Francis concealed his face in his handkerchief. The Admiral felt painfully affected. The greatest affliction he had ever endured was brought full upon his mind, and he keenly participated in the Baronet's feelings, and thought he had reason to complain. After a pause of some moments, the Admiral said he must allow there was some justice in what he had advanced. Sir Francis perceived that he was softened, and he redoubled his importunities to induce him to promise Miss Valency should receive him the next morning, and at length declared nothing but force should compel him to

leave the house till he had received that assurance and the Admiral, who dreaded every moment that some accident might discover to Miss Melville that Sir Francis was in the house, gave his word that Miss Valency should give the Baronet a patient hearing the ensuing day ; but on conditions that he should never again intrude himself into her presence without her permission.

Honorina waited on the top of the stairs to ascertain the moment of Sir Francis's departure, which she soon contrived to make known to her sister. How irksome to Ella was the period for which she was still compelled to support society ! indeed, each member of the family was glad when the party broke up.

CHAPTER XI.

To the disgrace of men, it is seen that there are women both more wise to judge what evil is expected, and more constant to bear it when it hath happened.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

THEY were no sooner alone than the Admiral entered into the particulars of his interview with Sir Francis ; and greatly indeed was Ella distressed, when she found that her uncle had pledged himself for her appearance the next day ; but it was useless to comment on the subject, he brought forward forcible arguments in support of what he had done ; and, as it could not now be retracted, Ella ap-

peared to admit them. She passed the night in the most painful state of mind ; for, though her resolution did not falter, to maintain it against the vehement attack she knew it must sustain, would be a most severe trial. She requested her mother to be present on the occasion, that a check might be laid on the violence of Sir Francis's feelings, which, in a *tete-a-tete*, he would have taken no pains to suppress.

As soon as breakfast was over, the Admiral sat off on a long walk with Honoria ; for they were both anxious to be out of the way, and to avoid the sight of Sir Francis, in a state of mind they could not but compassionate.

Ella sat awaiting the arrival of the Baronet with sensations, resembling those of a patient, in momentary expectation of the surgeon who is to perform some painful operation : she

carried the comparison still further ; for the expected rap at the door no sooner saluted her ears, than an oppressive sickness came over her ; but, struggling with it, she took a glass of water from the side-board, and when Sir Francis entered, she betrayed no very violent symptoms of emotion. His face was flushed to a crimson hue, and his aspect was that of resentment for unmerited injury. He only bowed as he came in, and took the seat the footman placed for him, without uttering a word. A most awkward silence of some moments ensued, which Sir Francis was apparently anxious to break, but too much agitated to speak. Mrs. Valency continued netting with great perseverance, and Ella was summoning up courage to deliver the *speech* she had previously framed in her own mind, and was about to attempt uttering it, when he at length accosted her with studied formality,

“I thought, ma’am, I was to be permitted a *private* audience.”

Ella was prepared for this reproach, and replied,

“You may consider this as such. I have no secrets from my mother, and it is at my request she is so kind as to remain present, during this unpleasant scene—a scene which nothing but the promise my uncle so imprudently gave would have induced me to admit.”

“Go on, ma’am,” said Sir Francis, when she paused, “go on I beg! this high tone, this unfeeling manner, is exactly what I might have been led to expect from the tenor of that precious epistle you so *tenderly* addressed to me.”

“This tone of irony, Sir Francis, is ill adapted to the present occasion, and wholly unprovoked on my part; I neither intended to assume a *high* tone, nor unfeeling manner towards you, but

merely to convince you that the resolution, the grounds of which I explained to you in my letter, is unalterable, and that therefore any kind of intercourse between us, can only be productive of mutual distress."

"*Mutual distress!*" echoed he, his voice changing from the vehemence of anger to the pathos of anguish. "*Mutual distress!* no, whatever *I* may endure, you will not suffer." As he spoke he approached her; and, standing before her, with his back to Mrs. Valency, he fixed on her a gaze of unutterable tenderness, and passionately exclaimed, "Ella! has my conduct towards you merited such a return?"

"No," she replied, in faltering accents, as she cast her eyes to the ground; "I have nothing to reproach you with on my own account, but I am not so selfish as to indulge a regard for you, merely because you have distinguished me, when I know

that your conduct towards others has been such, as I cannot but deem unpardonable."

"Whoever has represented it in that light has been guilty of the most flagrant falsehood! Tell me who has dared to asperse my character, or to assert that I ever acted otherwise in regard to Miss Melville, or any other lady, who has done me the honour to to prefer me, than with the strictest propriety;—tell me who the meddling villain is who informed you that I *knew* Miss Melville."

"I can readily satisfy you on that head, Sir Francis—it was *yourself*!"

"*Me!*" cried the Baronet, in amazement, forgetting at that moment what she alluded to.

"Yes *you*, Sir Francis: you shewed me the unquestionable evidence of your knowledge of Miss Melville, and the light in which she considered you, under her own hand writing, signed

with her name; and, with duplicity, you may now blush to recollect, assured me that she was *no more*."

Sir Francis looked quite confounded, and inwardly execrated his own vanity; but soon recovering himself, he said,

"*You* ought to be the last person to reproach me for a subterfuge, my affection for you induced me to adopt. I was then weak enough to fancy myself beloved with romantic tenderness, and dreaded to excite uneasiness in confessing that there was another woman in existence, for whom I had once felt a preference."

Ella caught at this avowal to substantiate her charge against him, and immediately said, "You have now, by your own confession, proved the justice of my chief accusation! you acknowledge you once felt a preference for Miss Melville."

"I do; but she cannot with justice

prefer a single complaint against me. I offered her marriage repeatedly ; her state of health would not permit her to accept my proposals, and she at length voluntarily dissolved all connexion with me, without even deigning to enter into any particular explanation of her reasons for so doing. And am I to be made answerable for her caprice, and be accused of cruelty and inhumanity, because she chose to be whimsical, or because nature gave her a poor constitution, and a querulous, complaining disposition? Nothing can be more absurd or unreasonable than your making a plea of my conduct towards her (which has been in every respect strictly honourable) for suddenly withdrawing from the most sacred engagement, which was all but indissoluble ; nay, which could not be dissolved, with honour, by either party."

" Pardon me, Sir Francis, I think

it could never be too late to withdraw, even *with* honour from an engagement of this nature, were you to discover that you had been deceived in the opinion of the person you were about to have intrusted with your happiness. The *dishonour* would rest with him who had practised the imposition."

"You do not mean to apply that to the present case I presume?"

"Not exactly ; you probably consider those faults as venial, which I look upon as unpardonable."

"If you consider a general attention to your sex, and an anxiety to please, as unpardonable, I plead guilty at once."

"No, no, a *general* attention I should never condemn you for ; but a *particular* attention to one individual, when a man is solemnly engaged to another, I must ever reprobate."

"Why, surely you cannot accuse me of casting a single glance towards

another, while you did me the honour to admit my assiduities?

“ You perfectly understand what I mean. My intimacy with you has been very brief; but long before I knew you more than by report, I heard more than *one* female named as the object of your *particular* admiration, at a time when your hand could not have been at your own disposal. But this is merely going over what I said in my letter. I therein explained to you my sentiments on the subject, and I see no reason whatever to alter my opinion, or the resolution formed upon it, and you must excuse me if I am anxious to terminate an interview which *cannot* answer any purpose.”

When Ella made a movement to leave him, Sir Francis betrayed the most passionate emotion: he reproached her in the bitterest terms for the cool indifference of her manner, ac

cused her having affected a regard for him she had never felt, and then again affirmed it his full persuasion, that her inconstant, fickle nature, had occasioned her to withdraw her love from him, and bestow it on some new object more recently known to her.

“ I am not at a loss,” he continued, in almost breathless rage, “ I am not at a loss to conceive who the canting, whining, hypocrite is, who has dared to asperse my character, and wormed himself into your good graces.”

“ Ella was terrified; but anxious to cenceal her feelings, she said with apparent indifference—

“ Your words do not affect me; because, whatever you may say, I am sure your heart does not harbour so injurious a suspicion of me.”

Sir Francis thought she was softened, and this instantly changed the current of his ideas; and, regardless of Mrs. Valency's presence, he plead-

ed his cause with the most ardent impetuosity and tender expostulation. Ella felt that this was the severest moment of trial; for she could not listen unmoved to the impassioned language of a man she had once thought of as her future husband, and who appeared so devoted to her.

The tears swam in Mrs. Valency's eyes; but she hastily brushed them away, lest her daughter should perceive them, and be so much softened as to act in opposition to her better judgment. But Ella combated Sir Francis's arguments with firmness, though not with severity; but, in order to enable her to do so, she was obliged continually to recal the recollection, that Sir Francis had repeatedly inflicted on others all the wretchedness he was at that moment enduring, and she was only avenging the cause of her sex.

Every attempt she made to quit him he opposed in the most violent manner, till at length Mrs. Valency interfered (which she had not done by a single word before) and begged he would not compel her daughter to prolong an interview so distressing to all parties. Without attending to her, he paced the room in a delirium of agitation, uttering incoherent ravings, but always keeping near the door to obstruct Ella's approach to it. Mrs. Valency followed, and impressively laid her hand on Sir Francis's arm to arrest his attention, having previously made a sign to her daughter to quit the room through a viranda, by which she could gain another apartment. This Ella did with precipitation, ere Sir Francis was aware of her design. It was in vain Mrs. Valency attempted to appease the storm that followed; and, after behaving like a madman, Sir

Francis rushed from the house in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment.

He had not lost a moment, after the receipt of Ella's letter, in hastening to Weymouth, for he flattered himself that however she might boast of the firmness of her resolution, it would not long withstand the force of his presence, his importunities, and supplications; and that she would lend a willing ear to an explanation he could easily make appear plausible. Though in hopes of provoking her to asseverate her regard for him, he had accused her of inconstancy, and hinted at Major Burlington as his rival, he had too high an opinion of himself really to harbour a suspicion of the kind. He believed that the Major had informed her of some particulars relative to Miss Melville; but as he was conscious he had asserted nothing but the truth, he did not feel inclined

to call him to an account for it by risking his own life. But the chief part of her information he doubted not Ella had obtained from Mrs. Melville; who, he knew might easily be led to betray all the secrets of her family to any one who artfully questioned her. Sir Francis really loved Ella better than any woman he had ever known before, and his future happiness seemed dependent on her being his wife; and where he had only the inclination of the lady to consult, Sir Francis never apprehended a disappointment. To find a woman who was able to withstand all his allurements merely on a principle of rectitude, and by opposing her judgment to her love, was as mortifying to his vanity as afflicting to his heart. The violence of his resentment at first kept up his spirits, and he left Weymouth directly after his interview with Ella, mentally

vowing vengeance against the whole sex, and deriving his only consolation from the remembrance of those whose happiness he had sacrificed to his vanity.

CHAPTER XII.

O home ! dear home ! what magic's in thy name,
What social comfort dost thou not contain ;
What joy to witness at our fire side,
The smiling faces of the friends we've tried :
Friends who participate in all we feel,
Who aid our pleasures, and our sorrows heal.

E. P.

IT was some days before Ella could recover the effects of the struggle she had undergone, or assume an appearance of cheerfulness ; during that time Major Burlington had left Weymouth. The period was fast approaching, which Mrs. Valency had fixed on for her return home, and the lively regret Miss Melville expressed on hearing

this mentioned, and the influence it had on her spirits, suggested the idea of inviting her to stay some time with them. The proposal was accordingly urged with much warmth and sincerity, and agreed to with evident pleasure; and Miss Melville quitted Weymouth with Mrs. Valency's family, while her mother and Mr. Grantly also proceeded homeward. The Admiral was going to spend a month at the seat of a friend of his, and the Irby's were not to leave Weymouth for some time. Honoria, as they were driving out of the town, ejaculated with great fervour "Thank goodness! I shall not see Jonathan Irby again for some time."

The journey proved extremely agreeable to Miss Melville, as the most tender attention was paid her, nor could she feel otherwise than content and cheerful, in the society of three amiable women, who each seem-

ed striving to make her forget every latent cause of uneasiness. To the rest of the party the journey was certainly not quite as cheerful as it would have been, had they been returning home to celebrate Ella's nuptials, nor could she herself fail to recollect how differently she had expected to perform that journey. But she contemplated the reviving colour on Elizabeth's cheeks, and met the serene and grateful smile that sought an answering glance; and, suppressing every murmur, exulted in the sacrifice she had made.

Early on the second day, a joyous outcry announced the first glimpse of the sheltered abode, scarcely discernible for the vine and ivy that covered the back, and rose even to the chimnies, while the front displayed a trellis colonnade embowered in the pyrocantha, phillyrea, and passion-flower, which were trained over it; the latter

in full bloom. Through the arches you could perceive the long French windows opening to the viranda, from which you descended to a sloping lawn, bordered by plantations of myrtle, arbutus, and other evergreens, that presented lasting verdure. Through these a path conducted to a rustic gate, opening to some steps cut in the rock, and which led directly to the sea shore. The door of entrance was at the end of the cottage, sheltered by a little porch, supported by rugged pillars entwined by the cobeo and convolulus-major, whose tendrils extended to the roof. Elizabeth was at a loss for words to express her admiration on reaching this picturesque abode, and was no less surprised than pleased, after passing through a small vestibule (where, in a nitch, stood a finely executed, but diminutive statue of Ceres) to be ushered into a spacious apartment, whose dimensions far

exceeded any she conceived the cottage could contain ; it extended along the whole front. Behind it was a good sized dining room and small study. Miss Melville could find no one to attend to her rapturous expressions of admiration ; for Mrs. Valency, Ella, and Honoria, seemed to be the alternate prey of an enormous Newfoundland dog, who was bounding from one to the other, and springing to their very shoulders ; while a fine large cat was rubbing herself against them, purring and reering up to solicit the caresses they very liberally bestowed on their old favourite, at the risk of being upset by Neptune's boisterous welcome. But nothing could overwhelm the garrulity of an old woman, who was giving an account of every thing that had happened since the departure of the family, and evincing her joy at its return, almost as noisily as Neptune.

Honorina at length escaped from this combined assault; and, impatient to visit every part of a dwelling, to which she was so much attached, she hurried Elizabeth all over the house; and, leaving her in the chamber allotted her, hastened to pay a flying visit to all her pets, and then returned to the drawing-room, and eagerly assisted her sister in replacing all the little ornaments by which their own ingenuity had decked the apartment, but which had been carefully put away during their absence. Then they sought the garden, and returned loaded with flowers, which they arranged in various ways about the room and vestibule, and their impatience to place every thing in its usual order, soon rendered them successful. Their industry was requited by the admiration Elizabeth bestowed on all the new objects that caught her eyes on re-appearing. It was not the dimen-

sions of the room, nor the beauty of the prospect, apparent from the windows, that now excited her approbation, but the extreme comfort, and simple elegance of the interior, and the number of objects of utility as well as of amusement which every where presented themselves. Here were work tables, work boxes, and beautiful little spinning wheels, that looked as if they had been made for the use of fairies: there was the reading stand, and every nook presented a little shelf stuffed with books; for we all know that, in these enlightened days, books are not confined to the library or study. Opposite the window stood a telescope fixed on a pivot; at the further end of the room was a grand piano forte, and near it stood a harp; a tambourine, a flute, and flageolet, lay on the piano, and under it appeared the case of a

violin; not that we would imply that the young ladies exercised their lungs on these wind instruments, or their arms in scraping the fiddle, though they might not have been without precedents of their own sex. But our fair friends had no ambition to become pipers or fiddlers, but merely retained these instruments for the use of their male acquaintances. The flute and violin belonged to William Irby, but he always left them there for the good of the public. The chess and backgammon board, the scrap-book, prints, and caricatures; in short the whole contents of this cheerful repository were calculated to banish idleness, and chase *ennui*.

Elizabeth declared she had never before beheld a scene so formed to excite comfortable sensations. The unclouded radiance of a mid-day sun threw a luminous brightness over the prospect without, and the land-

scape, bounded by the ocean, looked enchanting through the arch of the treillage, overshadowed by the pendant shrubs.

CHAPTER XIII.

The best sure symptom of a mind at ease,
Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home!

YOUNG.

THE way of life her friends now pursued proved as agreeable to Elizabeth as their society: the regular distribution of time to their various avocations and accomplishments was persevered in with little deviation, and not a moment left to hang heavy on their hands, or admit the intrusion of dulness and discontent. In summer they never breakfasted later than eight o'clock, and the young ladies frequently rose two hours before, disliking the idea of devoting the finest

part of the morning to sleepy uselessness. The daily paper always appeared on the breakfast table, and at the conclusion of the meal the study became the rendezvous, and silence presided for some hours, while such books as required too much attention to be read out, and such other studies and improvements, as demanded the exercise of thought and close application, were pursued ; after which the garden became the scene of relaxation, and air and bodily activity prevented the ill effects of sedentary employments. The cultivation of lighter accomplishments filled up the time till half an hour before dinner, which was served at five o'clock ; after which the conversation flowed with all that vivacity which naturally resulted from the subjects not being exhausted on the preceding part of the day. Music, walking, and reading aloud, divided the remainder of the evening,

and they were seldom in bed before midnight ; Mrs. Valency being of opinion, that people in general devoted too many hours to repose, and that those who are not afflicted with any bodily sufferings, or compelled to endure any extraordinary fatigue, might do with much less sleep than they allow themselves, and thereby add to the period of their existence all those hours they would snatch from insensibility.

In the way we have thus described passed the even tenor of their days ; all their country acquaintances were at that time absent from their estates, at different watering places ; and, excepting a casual visit now and then from the clergyman of the parish, an elderly studious man, who always came from home with reluctance, they saw not a creature in the light of an associate for the space of a month. They would have regretted

it on Miss Melville's account, had she appeared less contented than themselves, but she agreed in all their sentiments, entered into all their feelings, and participated in their pursuits. Their method of passing time had at least the charm of novelty to her; she had never been accustomed to see persons so systematically employ themselves, or appear to derive so much amusement from internal resources. She had received that kind of education furnished by a public seminary; and, when she returned home, had never been taught to seek amusement within herself; but, if she drew a little, played a little, and sat with a needle in her fingers, though her work might be resting on her lap, she was considered very industrious. The moment any company was announced (and her mother's house was at all hours open to visitors), every thing like occupation was laid

aside. Elizabeth had a mind superior to the trifling pursuits she had been accustomed to ; her imagination required to be employed, her thoughts to be exercised, and therefore had her passion for Sir Francis gained such powerful ascendancy. She had had nothing to oppose to it, and it had taken the place of all those better sentiments, and reasoning faculties, that wanted a stimulus to exertion. Years and reflection had brought with them some of those advantages, which the proper cultivation of her mind would have produced long before, and enabled her at length to act with propriety and firmness ; but from the time she became intimate with Mrs. Valency's family, her struggles ceased. The sound judgment that breathed in every sentiment that met her ear, was the prop of all her fluctuating opinions, and at once gave stability to those that were correct ; their ex-

ample confirmed the right bias of her mind, and discovered to her the path of serenity and peace, and it was no longer in the power of Sir Francis, nor any other human being, to make her permanently unhappy. She became the pupil of Miss Valency, and her amiable tractability endeared her daily more and more to Ella, who, rejoicing in the amendment of her health, which could no longer be termed precarious, would have thought it impious to have regretted the circumstance which had made her instrumental to Elizabeth's happiness.

Honorina and Ella were discoursing on the many amiable traits they had discovered in their friend's character, and particularly commending the cheerful satisfaction she appeared to derive from their domestic pursuits, without betraying a wish for any other society.

“Many girls,” observed Honorina,

“ would say we were very good sort of humdrum people, but that it was extremely tiresome to be staying with us, when we had no other company in the house.”

“ Yes,” returned her sister,—“ for example, I don’t know what would tempt me to have poor dear Harriet Irby as an inmate under such circumstances. She would be sighing all day long over the pleasures of Weymouth, and talking of balls, plays, and public places, till she made us sick of the very names. By the way, she insisted on writing to me, I wonder we have not heard from her.” Honoria’s countenance betrayed abstraction, and Ella continued “ what are you thinking of Honoria? something very interesting I am sure.”

“ You have guessed right—I was thinking of Major Burlington.”

“ Ah, you think *him* interesting, do you?”

“ Yes, and so do you.”

“I acknowledge it; he certainly appeared very amiable, as far as we could judge on so short an acquaintance.”

“Well, and I was thinking besides,” continued Honoria, “that he and Elizabeth would make an excellent match; they seem both so mild, so gentle, so conciliating.”

“*Perhaps* they would; but I don’t think similarity of disposition always promotes the greatest happiness in the married state: I am not quite sure that Major Burlington would not prefer your gaiety, and energy of character, to what more resembled his own: besides, you are both musical, both draw, and——”

“Now there,” interrupted Honoria, “I must differ with *you*, and completely dissent from the general opinion, that *similarity of pursuits* is desirable in the married state. Don’t you

recollect Mr. and Mrs. T——; they were both devoted to music, and I have seen him worry her to play over one unfortunate bar in the way *he* supposed right, and *she* supposed wrong, till she has started up from the instrument in a passion of tears. And have you forgotten Lord and Lady L——? they had both a literary turn, and were everlastingly disputing about the pronunciation of a word—or the most modern manner of spelling it, was a never-failing source of discord; and when they submitted the efforts of their pen to each others inspection, it was often but to cavil over certain sentences, while the whole effect of the production was lost by their stopping to quarrel over some expression. Now, if Lady L—— had only been moderately learned, she would have thought her husband an oracle, and submitted to him accordingly; and if Mr. T——

had been ignorant of the science of music, he would have been perfectly satisfied with his wife's execution."

"It is very true," said Ella, "but to return to Major Burlington. I really think he appears the kind of man to make any rational woman happy, provided she had no other attachment; and I rather suspect, Honoria, that you think the same."

"No, indeed!" cried Honoria, with great simplicity; "at least I have never thought about him in *that* light, in regard to myself. I don't pretend to asseverate that I should *refuse* him if he was to make me an offer, and really was as agreeable as he appears; then, you know, as I don't care about any body else, I should seriously set about *trying* to like him, and I dare say I should succeed. But I am sure I should never think of it, unless he were to begin first."

They both laughed at this candid

avowal, and Ella assured her sister she was convinced the Major had nothing to answer for on her account.

The next morning their breakfast was enlivened by the arrival of a letter from Miss Irby. It was addressed to Ella, who had more charity for her correspondent's insipidity than Honoria, and was therefore burthened with the whole weight of her friendship. The epistle was read aloud for the general amusement.—

LETTER.

“ MY DEAR GIRL,

“It was the most *unfortunate* thing in the world that you should happen to leave Weymouth on the day which you *did*, for on the very *next* evening there was a ball you know; and I am certain you would have staid for it could you have had the least idea of *who* would have been *there*. Only imagine, my dear girl; I am 'sure you will

hardly believe your affectionate friend, when she tells you, that Major Burlington returned to Weymouth the very day after you left it, and with him—Heavens! how shall I find words to convey an adequate idea of the fascinating, love inspiring, dazzling, Spencer Burlington! O, my dear friend, what a name; and yet I thought nothing of it till I saw the man; and now I think it conveys every thing that is exquisite and delightful. You thought Major Burlington handsome—he! what would you then think of his brother! the Major is not worthy to be spoken to, looked at, or thought of, in his presence. Every lady in the room was dying to dance with him. But, my dear creature, only think of my good fortune; I got a set with him; and, my dear, Mr. Spencer Burlington is so charmingly *coxcomical*, he would not dance with any of those who fancied themselves *beauties*,

though I know they tried all they could to get him. But his *conversation*, I cannot give you any idea of it! he is so droll, I thought I should have expired with laughing at every word he said. Such a contrast to poor Major Burlington, *he* would not dance, and did nothing the whole evening but lament that your family had left Weymouth; he said he had no idea you were going so soon. But Mr. Spencer Burlington has got the most *delightful* carriage! and such *sweet* horses. Mamma told me he had them new on purpose for his marriage with a rich heiress, who resides in his neighbourhood; but I am sure it is not true. William does nothing but torment us to leave Weymouth, he says he is quite tired of it. Mr. Spencer Burlington was at the public breakfast the next morning; but there was such an abominable crowd he could not get near me: pity my mortification, my dear

friend ! Alas ! it was complete when I found that he left Weymouth the ensuing day.

“I cannot think what they come for only to remain so short a time. Believe me, my dear girl, I miss you exceedingly ; we were at the play last night ; Mr. Spencer Burlington knew all the great people among the strangers here. I begin to be quite impatient to be with you ; Mr. Spencer Burlington is now at his estate, it is only thirty miles from us. Heaven preserve you, my dear friend, I long to embrace you. I dare say Miss Melville can tell you all about Mr. Spencer Burlington.—Adieu.

“ Believe me your unalterable and sincerely attached.

HARRIET.

“ Pray give my love to the amiable group. Mr. Spencer Burlington’s grooms wore light blue liveries with

silver lace. We shall leave Weymouth the latter end of the week.—

Yours for ever.”

“ Indeed,” said Ella, laughing as she refolded this nonsensical scrawl ; “ this Mr. *Spencer Burlington* ought to pay the postage of this letter, for he has certainly more to do with it than any body else.”

“ Your unalterable and sincerely attached friend has done him very little service,” observed Honoria, “ for she has just said enough to incline me to take an antipathy to him. I dare say he is an empty-headed coxcomb, whom one could not venture to be commonly civil to, for fear he should think one in love with him : and all this praise too, at the expense of our poor dear Major, whom we all like so much. I am sorry he did not reach Weymouth in time to see us before we set off.”

Miss Melville now communicated the contents of a letter she had received from her mother, who informed her of a ball that was to take place in her neighbourhood, on a day which she named, and she added a most pressing invitation to Mrs. Valency and her daughters, to spend a week at her house, and attend the ball. The distance was only two stages, and Mrs. Melville assured them, in the name of Mr. Grantly, that his carriage should meet them midway.

When Miss Melville warmly seconded her mother's invitation, Mrs. Valency shook her head, and said for her own part she would rather remain quietly at home ; but if her daughters had any wish to go to the ball, she would not disappoint them. Ella immediately said, she would greatly prefer staying at home ; but Honoria with equal candour declared she should like to go very much, provided she

could do so without incurring much expense, for it must be remembered that a certain plan of economy was resumed with their cottage life, and that the carriage horses were only the attendants of their summer excursions.

“ But,” continued Honoria, who was fertile in expedients to promote her desire,—“ as Mr Grantly is so kind as to say his carriage should meet us, we have only to get so far, and I am sure our good parson will lend us his gig, which he does not use once in a month, and John can drive Miss Melville and me over.”

Mrs. Valency offered no objection to this plan ; but, when Elizabeth was absent, Honoria declared, she would not stay a whole week at Mrs. Melville’s, as she was sure she should be tired to death of it ; but that she would go over the day before the ball, and return the day after. Mrs. Valency observed, that she could not go

over the day *before* the ball, as it was to take place on a Monday, and travelling on Sunday was out of the question, in such a cause. It was therefore settled they should leave home on Saturday; Miss Melville was to return with Honoria.

CHAPTER XIV.

Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
When a loud summons shook the gate.

ROKEBY.

IT was now the month of September, and they were drinking tea by candle light, when a double rap at the house door rather startled them, from its being quite unexpected at that hour.

“ Who can that be?” cried Ella; and Honoria, who wished it might be some welcome guest, and therefore feared it was not, said in rather a *hopeless* tone,

“ I dare say it is only some old tax-gatherer or churchwarden, come for poor rates, or taxes.”

“ It is an unusual hour for an application of that kind,” observed Mrs. Valency ; all their eyes were fixed on the door, which now opened and presented to their view the person of Major Burlington.

A general exclamation of pleasure denoted their sensations on the occasion, and each was eager to extend a hand to welcome him. He had rather more colour than usual, while apologizing for his intrusion ; but added, that being in the neighbourhood, he could not deny himself the gratification of calling to inquire after them. He did not explain how he came to appear at that hour, but seemed embarrassed while endeavouring to account for his visit, and readily dropped the subject, on Mrs. Valency’s reiterating her assurance that she was extremely happy to see him. She asked after his brother : for when we have heard so much of a person, we

begin to fancy that we know them, and feel interested in their welfare. The Major said he had parted from his brother only that morning, and had left him engaged with a house full of friends, and that he had taken that opportunity of leaving him, in order to fulfil his design of paying his respects to the ladies. Here the Major betrayed that he had come over solely for that purpose; and, having done so, his embarrassment returned, and again he endeavoured to make an excuse for having waited on them, which was quite unnecessary, as there was nothing extraordinary in his seeking to renew an acquaintance he had found agreeable, and proving that he was not forgetful of the kindness he had received.

The ladies were not inclined to marvel at his appearance, nor did they deem any explanation of it requisite,

till the Major's manner excited these ideas, and they began to think.

“ I wonder what induced him to come so far to see *us*.” Then followed — “ most likely the same attraction which led him back to Weymouth, supposing that *we* were there.” But *who* that attraction was centred in remained to be discovered, and the young ladies alternately regarded each other as the Major's loadstone.

Though he had taken so much trouble to obtain their society, he was more reserved and silent than usual, and it was a long time before he could succeed in resuming his accustomed manner. This, however, he at length accomplished, with the assistance of music and singing, and he then appeared more happy and animated than they had ever beheld him ; and when at a late hour he arose to depart, he told them he had secured a bed at the little inn, (where he had left his horses)

and should have the pleasure of seeing them again the next morning.

Ella and Honoria laughed a good deal about the Major, after they had retired, and each endeavoured to persuade the other, that he beheld her with peculiar complacency. Ella declared his whole attention had been devoted to her sister, and that he had scarcely taken any notice of her; but Honoria assured her that his eyes had been frequently fixed on her (Ella), and that looks were more eloquent than words. At length they both agreed that Miss Melville's unobtrusive charms had attracted a congenial spirit. They were the more confirmed in this opinion, when they the next morning repaired to the shrubbery, and met Elizabeth and the Major, who were conversing with great animation, though in a suppressed tone. They both coloured, and instantly

ceased speaking, as the sisters came rather suddenly upon them.

Honorina bounded on towards a small cavity in the rock, where they were constructing a little grotto, and called to Ella to follow her, adding,

“ We have not half shells enough, let us go down to the shore and pick up some more.”

Ella pursued her in silence, but the Major hastened after them, and begged he might be permitted to accompany them.—Elizabeth said she would not be left behind, and they all descended to the sands together.

Mrs. Valency soon joined them, and the ball became the subject of conversation, when she mentioned that Miss Melville and Honorina were going over to it.

“ I heard something about a ball,” said the Major, “ but at present, as I am no dancer, I feel no interest in those kind of things. I shall be glad

to be out of the way while it is going on. Will you permit me, Mrs. Valency, to remain in your vicinity, till the gaiety is over, and your daughters returned?"

Mrs. Valency felt surprised, and was a little embarrassed how to answer, while Honoria stole a comical glance at her sister, which seemed to say, "I do believe it is *mamma*, after all, that the Major admires most."

Her mother, evading the Major's question, returned, "Ella is not going to the ball; she will remain with me, and,"——

"Is not Miss Valency going?"—interrupted Major Burlington, in a tone of surprise. He was answered in the negative, and the subject was dropped: but Honoria was still more diverted to observe him attach himself to her mother during their walk, while the conversation that passed between them was unheard by any one else.

The next morning, just as John drove the parson's gig up to the door, Major Burlington came in at the gate, and committed a letter for his brother to the charge of Miss Melville.

“ Then *decidedly* the Major is not going,” whispered Honoria to Ella; “ so *positively* it must be *you* or *mamma*.” Ella coloured and looked uneasy; and, as her sister and Elizabeth were driven off, she returned into the house with a thoughtful aspect, leaving her mother and Major Burlington walking before the door.

The vicar's horse was lazy for want of exercise, and the young ladies began to get weary of his jog-trot before they reached L——, though every time John raised the whip, Honoria cried out, “ O, don't strike him, John, he is not used to be hurried; let him go his own pace.” So at his *own pace* they reached L——, about two hours after Mr Grantly had arrived there.

He was impatiently looking out for them, and conducted them into an inn, where a collation awaited them.

When they were again upon the road, Mr Grantly said to Honoria; “ Who do you think arrived at—— last night, and came out of their road, on purpose to go to the ball—your old friends the Irby’s.”

“ O horrible Jonathan Irby! he will be at the ball,” ejaculated Honoria with a look of dismay, that much amused her companions.

“ I assure you,” said Mr Grantly, “ *horrible* Jonathan Irby, will be in great request, whatever you may think of him; for there is a great dearth of gentlemen at our country assemblies, and I would advise you as a friend to secure him in time for a partner; your prior acquaintance may give you a claim on him, which I would have you avail yourself of.”

“ Don’t talk of him,” cried Hono-

ria, “ I would much rather lead off with a dancing bear, provided he was muzzled ; for there would be some entertainment in seeing poor Bruin sideling about, and clearing the way before him ; but Jonathan Irby can neither amuse eyes, ears, or understanding. However, his brother will be there, and that will be some compensation ; for as men are to be scarce, we shall *not* disdain him you know Elizabeth.”

The first idea that struck Honoria on entering Mrs. Melville's house, was, that of self gratulation, that she was not going to remain there a *whole week*, and she was obliged to recollect she had repaired there for the purpose of attending a ball, before she could persuade herself she was on a party of *pleasure*. Yet it was a good house, situated in a good street, in a good town ; but it *was* in a *street*, and it was in a *town*, and

that in Honoria's opinion was sufficient to make it disagreeable, in comparison with the light and airy pleasures of the country. The high houses opposite gave a gloom to apartments, rendered still more obscure by venetian blinds let down nearly to the bottom, in order to preserve the furniture from being injured by the light or the sun. It was handsome, and in such high order that no one would have suspected, from its appearance, that it had ever been made use of. Not a single chair was out of its place, nor a single article lying about the room that could denote it was inhabited. A highly ornamented, but silent time-piece, stood on the chimney, the hand pointing to the hour of midnight, aptly corresponding with a scene of solitude, silence, and gloom.

“I am not very fond of the noise of children,” thought Honoria, “but I

would rather have half a dozen of them racing up and down the house, than endure this *prim quiet* dulness."

Mrs. Melville was delighted to see her daughter, and overwhelmed Honoria with attention; and it was with the greatest difficulty Honoria could prevent her absolutely pouring a glass of wine down her throat, at the same time that she assured her dinner would be ready almost directly, but one glass of wine was positively required after a journey. However, Honoria defended herself as well as she could against the decanter and glass, *armed* with which Mrs. Melville pursued her all over the room, from which Honoria escaped, and hastened at length to change her dress before dinner. Mrs. Melville called after her to let her know she had invited a party to meet her in the evening, amongst which she would see some old friends. Honoria concluded they were the Irby's, and,

but for the thoughts of Jonathan, she would have been glad to meet them. The dining room presented a much more social scene than the *salle-a-compagnie*, for to that purpose she found the latter was strictly appropriated, as Mrs. Melville's common sitting-room was a back parlour.

Had Honoria ate one quarter of what Mrs. Melville endeavoured to force upon her plate, she probably would have died of an indigestion in that early stage of her history, and we must have drawn a veil over the closing scene of her existence, for so inelegant a catastrophe could not possibly have been expatiated on; but fortunately, she was content to satisfy a very good appetite, and neither Mrs. Melville's expostulations or assurance, that she had eaten nothing, could prevail on her to do more.

She heard the names of all the

persons that were expected in the evening; but, with the exception of Mr. Grantly, and Mrs. Irby's family, they were strangers to her. About an hour before they were expected, Mrs. Melville proposed adjourning to the before-mentioned drawing room, which was now somewhat enlivened by being well lighted; and here the good lady *sat up* to receive her company. Honoria easily perceived that not a chair was to be moved from its place till the guests arrived, and she congratulated herself that it was not cold weather, as she had no doubt the same *good order* would have been preserved. Here they sat for more than the space of an hour with their hands before them: it was the longest Honoria had ever passed, and she gladly hailed the first knock at the door, which seemed to electrify Mrs. Melville, though so long anxiously expected. She instantly flew to the

bell, and the tremendous peal that followed was like a token of rejoicing for the arrival of the guests.

A meagre kind of small talk succeeded the arrangement of four or five formal people round the walls of the apartment, and Honoria began to long for the appearance of the Irby's, and felt as stupid as any body present. Dulness is certainly contagious, as we may frequently observe a person, whom we know to be possessed of superior talents, wit, and understanding, appear as if destitute of either, in the company of stupid people, whose heaviness seems to overwhelm every effort at conversation, and smothers every spark of animation. It was probably thus Honoria felt, as she sat silent and reserved, and unable to recollect any thing to say well adapted to the company and occasion. At length the entrance of Mrs. Irby, Harriet, and

William, *without* Jonathan (who did not *choose* to come), gave an agreeable turn to her feelings. She thought William pleasanter than usual, while he entertained her with an account of all that had happened after he had left Weymouth, and sported off a new collection of choice quotations. But Harriet, who had made several attempts to speak to Honoria apart, at length got her aside; and, with an appearance of the greatest anxiety, asked her if she could tell her whether the *whole* of the party was assembled. Honoria said she believed so.

“ But are you *quite* sure! is there *nobody* else expected?” Honoria said she could not speak to a certainty, but she could easily ask Mrs. Melville.

“ O no, not for the world;—but I really thought—I don’t know what put it in my head—but I expected——”

Harriet looked down as if intending to blush, but no variation of her colour was visible; and, after a little more stammering and hesitation, she confessed that she had been led to conclude Mr. Spencer Burlington would have been there. That theme once entered upon, she pursued it with a volubility that did not even permit Honoria to sound a response. The carriages, horses, liveries, looks, features, words, manners, dress, of Mr. Spencer Burlington, were again enlarged upon in all their bearings; and, the whole summed up, she ended with these words; “I shall certainly go to church to-morrow.”

“To church!” echoed Honoria, with some surprise at hearing it so suddenly mentioned, after such a strange rhapsody. “I hope we shall all go to church to-morrow.”

“At all events, *I* am resolved to go; if it rains cats and dogs, and the

must be up to my knees—to church I shall go ; I would not stay away on any account whatever.”

“ I cannot but applaud your zeal,” said Honoria, “ I hope we shall have a good preacher.”

“ O, I don’t know any thing about the preacher,” returned Harriet, “ but I went to see the church this morning ; there are a great many monuments and those sort of things in it.”

“ Are they of great antiquity ?” asked Honoria.

“ I don’t know, I am sure ; but I examined the pews very minutely, and at the upper end of the middle aisle, exactly opposite a window shaded by a green silk curtain, is a very large seat, which is Mr. Spencer Burlington’s ; there is a brass plate on the door with his arms and the name of his place, Edenvale, marked on it. I understand he never misses attending church when he is in the neighbour-

hood ; nothing can be more proper in my opinion. *I* shall *certainly* go to church to-morrow."

Honorina could not forbear smiling. She made her escape from the vicinity of this violent devotee, as soon as she could, without rudeness, and left her to support the penserosa mood, which she thought fit to assume for the remainder of the evening ; seldom appearing to hear when spoken to, sighing often, and looking very miserable ; while her mother told Mrs. Melville a long story, relative to the particular occasion on which she was certain Harriet had caught a severe cold, which she feared had fallen on her spirits. Of the time or circumstances alluded to, Harriet herself was quite ignorant, as that was the first she had heard of them.

CHAPTER XV.

These are the day-dreams which wild fancy weaves.

DRYDEN.

Mrs. Miss Melville, and Honoria, went early to church; but had not long been seated, when Mrs. Irby, her daughter, and younger son, entered the same pew. Miss Irby's private prayer was unusually short; and, before she could seat herself, which she did next to Honoria, she exclaimed in great perturbation, but in a whisper—

“O, good gracious! he is there already, I declare.”

The vehemence of her exclamation

extorted an interrogation from Honoria.

“ Why, don’t you see,” said Harriet, directing her eyes towards the person she alluded to—“ have you no eyes, Honoria ?”

Eyes Honoria had, and they had not been useless to her, for they had by chance been cast on **the object** Harriet now pointed out, but in **whom** she had discerned nothing to excite particular observation. Harriet continued “ Look, look, Honoria, don’t you perceive? *that* is Mr. Spencer Burlington,”

“ *That* Mr. Spencer Burlington !” said Honoria, in unfeigned amazement ; but she checked herself, recollecting the purpose for which she had repaired to the holy place she was then in, and she blamed herself for admitting any ideas foreign to the duties she was about to perform. But she really had been unable, at first,

to suppress a demonstration of astonishment, on being told, that the person whom she had been looking at, scarcely knowing what her eyes were fixed on, and who on regarding a second time appeared to her actually plain, and even of an unpleasant aspect, was the very man whom she had been led to believe a model of masculine beauty, and whom she had figured to herself, as at least possessed of a striking person.

Honorina was better occupied than in observing whether Harriet was, or **was not**, particularly attentive to her devotions; but as soon as the whole was concluded, Harriet rose precipitately, and fixed her eyes on Mr. Burlington's seat. That gentleman did not seem at all aware of the notice which he attracted, but as soon as the congregation began to disperse, he left his pew; and, without casting his eyes to the right or left, went out of the

church by a small side door, not far from where he sat.

Harriet could not conceal her vexation; the cause of which Honoria was not aware of, till she looked round, and observed that Mr. Burlington had disappeared. She could not help laughing at the resentment Harriet betrayed, when in answer to her interrogations of what she thought of the gentleman in question, she frankly confessed, that in her eyes he had no pretensions to personal beauty. All the way home Harriet did nothing but reproach her, for having expressed what no asseverations of Honoria's could persuade her she really thought. In a letter, which Honoria addressed to her sister on her return from church, she wrote thus of Major Burlington's brother.

“ I have seen this *fascinating, love-inspiring, irresistible* Spencer Burlington! and am more than ever provoked at the absurdity and folly of my own

sex, which can pay such adulation to a man, who has really, after all the encomiums we have heard passed on him, nothing whatever in his person to recommend him. I never was so disappointed in any body's appearance in my life; he cannot bear a comparison with our interesting Major, who we were led to suppose so inferior to him. Figure to yourself a countenance of an unhealthy hue, undistinguished by any prominent feature, and which might pass without exciting a remark, but for a certain contraction of the lines that gives a repulsive cast to the whole expression, and confirms an opinion, in which we might otherwise hesitate, that, but for *charity*, he might be pronounced absolutely *ugly*. O wealth and distinction! what magic do ye possess, when ye can bestow on your favourites every charm requisite to recommend them to the generality of mankind!"

CHAPTER XVI.

But every feature had the power
 To aid the expression of the hour ;
 Whether gay wit, and humour sly,
 Danced laughing in his light blue eye,
 Or soft and saddened glances shew,
 The ready sympathy with woe ;
 Or in that wayward mood of mind,
 When various feelings are combined ;
 When joy and sorrow mingle near,
 And hope's bright wings are check'd by fear ;
 And rising doubts keep transport down,
 And anger lends a short-lived frown :
 In that strange mood which maids approve,
 E'en when they dare not call it love ;
 With every change his features play'd,
 As aspens shew the light and shade.

 ROKEBY.

HONORIA did not anticipate much
 pleasure from the ball, as she heard

there was such a scarcity of partners, and she was very much alarmed lest Jonathan Irby should ask her to dance; nor did she much like the idea of being led off by Mr. Burlington, who she concluded would request to be introduced to her, to acknowledge the attention of her family to his brother; and she had taken that sort of antipathy to him, which made her averse to his acquaintance. She attired herself with rather a melancholy sensation, half regretting the trouble she was taking to adorn her person, and thinking also that it seemed very dismal to be going to a ball without her mother and sister. Thus her feelings were far from pleasurable, till she entered the ball room, when the gaiety of the scene produced its natural influence on her mind,

William Irby engaged her for the first set, and Jonathan only approached to tell her she need not be alarmed,

for that he was not going to do her the honour of asking her to dance, for he should sit by, on purpose to quiz the ladies. Elizabeth declined dancing at first, as she knew she could not bear much, and preferred standing up later in the evening. Honoria had taken her place in the dance, when Mr. Grantly came up to her and said,

“ Mr. Burlington is very anxious to be presented to you ; and,” continued Mr. Grantly, laughing, “ I don’t think you will have any great objection to knowing one who is so deservedly a favourite with your sex.”

“ O no, I have no *objection*,” returned Honoria, “ but I hope his manners and conversation will not disappoint me as much as his person did ; he is certainly a very plain young man—But do tell me”—continued she, directing Mr. Grantly’s eyes towards the head of the dance, “ who is that very handsome man now standing at the upper

end of the room, conversing with a little crooked woman, who, I fancy, he is going to lead off. He has the whitest teeth I ever saw, and such variety of countenance, I really could not help watching him; he is animation itself."

Mr. Grantly burst into a fit of laughter, that greatly astonished Honoria; as soon as he could speak he said "Have you never seen that gentleman before?"

Honoria again regarded the stranger who had ceased speaking; "He has a great look of somebody I have seen before, now that he is silent, and his features composed," said she;—"but, O! it cannot be!—it is impossible!" she continued incredulously, her eyes still resting on the object of her attention.

Mr. Grantly exclaimed,—"*He is certainly a very plain young man!* I perceive you are greatly disappointed

in his person. Oh! he is a shocking ugly, ill-looking fellow."

"Surely," cried Honoria, "*that* cannot be Mr. Burlington!"

"'Tis even that very frightful looking personage," returned Mr. Grantly, highly amused at Honoria's astonishment, which really almost amounted to consternation; and she repeated,

"But it cannot—I am certain that cannot be the same person I saw at church yesterday. He then appeared to me pale, and of a very unpleasant cast of countenance."

"I can easily account for that," said Mr. Grantly; "I observed him when first I went into church yesterday; I was thinking his first impression upon you would not be a very favourable one; for no person who had never seen him before could have supposed him to be a handsome man. I have often told him he should not sit exactly opposite that green

curtain, it throws quite a cadaverous hue over the features, and yet it is not thick enough to exclude the glare of the sun from dazzling the eyes, and causes one to make faces. But, independent of that, I grant you, there never was a countenance in which the animation of speech made a greater change than in Spencer Burlington's. See him serious and sedate, or laughing and talking, and you can scarcely persuade yourself it is the same person; and now I think you are inclined to agree in the general opinion."

Honorina laughed and said, "it was too late to deny it, after being betrayed into expressing it." She now blamed herself for the precipitate judgment she had passed on Mr Burlington's appearance, and the haste she had been in to give utterance to what was merely founded on a few cursory glances. She perhaps too had felt

proud of differing from the general opinion which she thought too flattering to a man, and she was glad to withhold that praise from him, which the rest of her sex were too ready to bestow. It was true Spencer Burlington had no very prominent feature; but when beholding their combined expression, it seemed impossible they could have been better associated. To him, Marmontel's description of Carracioli would exactly apply. In order to animate his eyes it was necessary for him to speak; but then, in proportion as that lively, penetrating, and luminous intelligence, with which he was gifted, awoke, sparks of light as it were, were seen flying out. His figure was finely proportioned, and exactly of that stature most favourable to gracefulness; his walk dignified, but easy and unstudied; and his general manner, as far removed from the bustling velocity of a Tom

Shuffleton, as from the cynical solemnity of a Penruddock.

Honorina observed him leading down his little *Bossue*, with that air of hilarity, which evinced that he delighted in the exercise; and, with an encouraging smile, quickly putting her right when she missed the figure, which she did repeatedly, confused by the pleasures of exultation, and a desire to acquit herself better than usual. Honorina wondered what could have induced him to choose such a partner; and, still reluctant to do him justice, because she thought he was made too much of, she attributed his choice to a design of increasing the effect of his own elegance by the contrast. Mr Grantly was still standing near her, and she said to him—

“I suppose the lady Mr Burlington is dancing with, is some person of rank.”

“No,” he returned, “neither of rank nor fortune; and probably, if Spencer had not asked her to dance, she would have sat still the whole evening; and *that* I can affirm was his sole motive for soliciting her, and I have no doubt he feels happier in the consciousness of the pleasure she experiences, than if he was dancing with the loveliest woman in the room.”

“I hope that may be his *sole* motive,” thought Honoria, “but I am more inclined to suspect he may have been influenced by the idea of mortifying some beauty, who expected he would ask her.

Mr. Burlington was within a couple of her, when Honoria observed Mr. Grantly whisper to him *en-passant*; immediately Burlington’s eyes were fixed on her; and, regardless of what he was about, he at a sudden turn, almost upset his poor little partner,

who as usual encountered him in the wrong part of the dance. Honoria had then an opportunity of observing his countenance to the greatest advantage, while glowing with confusion, he half caught his staggering partner in his arms, and poured forth his apologies with so much vivacity, and seemed so really distressed at what he had done, that préjudice itself could not withstand the impression.

“ He *is* handsome,” thought Honoria, “ and it looks more like the beauty of the soul than of the features which illumines the countenance! Harriet is not quite so inexcusable as I thought her.”

Poor Harriet was sitting still, with discontent and mortification so visibly painted on her face, as to be apparent to every one who looked at her. Mr. Burlington had no sooner reached the termination of the dance, than apologizing to his partner for leaving her

for a few minutes, while she sat down to repose herself, he hastened to Mr. Grantly, who immediately introduced him to Honoria.

Burlington's laughing eyes could not but excite a corresponding expression as he said, " Miss Valency, I think I have already proved my anxiety for this honour; for I was no sooner informed that I was approaching a member of that family to whom I owe so much on my brother's account, than I was overwhelmed with a sense of all I would have said, and all I really felt; and, blinded by my emotion, had nearly upset my partner, having only eyes for one object."

The vivacity of this address, delivered with the most lively gesticulation, was well calculated to supersede the formality of a first presentation. Honoria could not forbear laughing, though she felt a little confused.

Burlington continued, " And now

that I have very ingeniously contrived to lay all my awkwardness at your door, will you permit me to inquire after Mrs. Valency and your sister, as persons whom I fancy myself very intimately acquainted with; nay, whom I positively am very intimately acquainted with; for their conduct towards my brother, has given me a more perfect insight into their hearts than I could have attained in an acquaintance of years—I hope they are quite well?” Honoria answered in the affirmative, and added some words of course relative to the pleasure they felt in having had it in their power to shew any civility to Major Burlington.

“ I am afraid you will have cause to repent it,” said Spencer; “ for, by a letter I have to thank Miss Melville for forwarding to me, and in which he informed me of the pleasure that was in store for me’ (his bow and

meaning look would not allow Honoria to misapply his words) “ I find that he has very nearly quartered himself on your family ; and he has thrown me into the greatest alarm, lest you should come to a resolution of turning him out, and never admitting any one a-kin to him, even if they should have the presumption to present themselves at your door.”

It was impossible, thus called on, that Honoria could do less than promise a welcome to the Major's kindred, nor forbear smiling at the ingenuity with which Burlington had extorted this assurance. The frequent looks he cast towards his partner, betrayed that he thought he ought to join her ; but still standing irresolute, and reluctant to retire, he said—

“ Now, were I a wise man, I should fly from you without uttering another syllable ; and, instead of feeling the excessive anxiety I do to cultivate

your acquaintance, I should vow eternal enmity to you for the malice you have discovered towards me."

"Malice!" echoed Honoria. "Yes, *malice* of the most refined description; never was the first sight of a person attended with more direful omens of disastrous fate, than that in which my dazzled eyes dared to fix themselves on you. In the first place, you made me guilty of the rudeness unparalleled in ball room annals, of all but knocking down my partner, and you have now to answer for a species of neglect, she will perhaps think little less pardonable, that of leaving her deserted and forlorn."

"O pray go to her immediately; I assure you *I* had not the least intention of detaining you," said Honoria, turning to her place in the dance.

"I know too well you had not, I wish I could think otherwise," cried Spencer, still lingering; "but are you

quite resolved not to answer me if I still remain? Is there no further hope of my engaging your attention?"

Honorina shook her head, and Spencer, smiling, flew off. William Irby now came across the dance, and, with no very amiable aspect, said —

"Miss Honorina, I believe you are not at all aware that five couples have passed down without your deigning to notice them."

"Very likely," she returned, "as I was standing out of the dance, they probably did not know that I belonged to it, so it is of no consequence."

"No, and it is of *no consequence*, I suppose, that I should be figuring away by myself, while you stood listening to that man who chatters like a magpie."

"Not half as much like a magpie as you were, hopping forward *singly* like the bird of ill omen, and now croaking forth your discontent."

William, though half angry, could not keep his countenance at this apt similitude, though the joke was at his own expense, and he retired to his place with restored complacency, spouting forth,

“ He’s a true son of mirth, who loves a jest,]
That puts his own good humour to the test.”

Jonathan Irby’s entertainment had hitherto consisted in perambulating the room with two other animals of a similar description, and contriving, as often as they could, to fall in the way of the master of the ceremonies ; who, anxious to procure partners for a number of ladies that were sitting still, repeatedly importuned all the young men he encountered idle, to oblige him by dancing ; and the amusement of this witty trio consisted in continually refusing upon absurd pretences ; and, as *they* conceived, making themselves of great consequence.

Mrs. Irby was gathering the history of most of the persons present from Mrs. Melville; and, turning over the substance of the communication in her own mind, as she *revised* and *improved* it, with notes and additions, founded on conclusions, conjectures, and inferences.

Harriet and Elizabeth were sitting together; but the former was in too bad a humour to converse, and Elizabeth was constrained to remain silent. When the set was over they were joined by Honoria; she was not engaged for the next, and it must be owned felt some anxiety about it. Harriet now found speech, and said with asperity,

“ I fancy you don't think Mr. Spencer Burlington so absolutely hideous *now*, by the pleasure with which you seemed to converse with him.”

“ I never thought him *absolutely hideous*, but I am very ready to ac-

knowledge I was quite mistaken in the opinion I first formed of his *person*."

"O yes, I dare say; but if he had been civil to me instead of you, I have no doubt he would still have been very ugly."

Honorina did not answer her, for she saw she was in a painful state of ill humour, which brought its punishment with it. Mr. Burlington now approached them: Honorina felt the bench shake from the agitation Harriet was in, for fear he should *not* be going to ask her to dance, and for fear he *should* be going to ask Honorina. She instantly commanded his attention by addressing him, and preventing him, as he had intended, from accosting Honorina.

"Dear me, what a tedious set you have had, I thought it would never be *over*; it is so tiresome sitting by."

Mr. Burlington only smiled, and

then asked Honoria if she were engaged. She replied in the negative, when he added—"Colonel Harrel, a particular friend of mine, is very anxious to dance with you."

Honoria only bowed; an indignant sensation was rising in her breast, but she suppressed it, and received Mr. Burlington's friend with a complacent smile, and soon after stood up with him. She had hardly taken her place when she felt somebody grasp her arm, with a significant pressure, and turning, perceived Harriet Irby; her face dilated with joy and exultation. She had hold of Mr. Burlington's arm, and said, in a soft tone, "My dear Honoria will you let me stand next you."

"Certainly," said Honoria, but she did not *appear* to see Mr Burlington.

Miss Melville, who was led out by William Irby, stood on the other side, and with her Honoria entered into a

lively conversation, in which William joined occasionally ; but the figure of the dance was one that would not permit of much intercourse between the opposite parties. Honoria was glad of it, for she did not feel inclined to talk to her partner. He was quite a gentlemanlike man, but had very staring eyes, and seemed too much disposed to make complimentary speeches to be agreeable to Honoria. Harriet, from time to time whispered, in Honoria's ear some nonsense about Mr. Burlington, and the *extraordinary* manner, and tone of voice, in which he had asked her to dance, but Honoria did not hear half she said : when she reached the top, Honoria observed Mr. Burlington cross over, as if he wished to speak to her, but she continued talking to Elizabeth, and though she hardly knew why, would not afford him the opportunity he seemed to seek ; but as Elizabeth led off he addressed

her, "Do you know, Miss Valency, I am quite unhappy!"

"Indeed! how very affecting!"

"Ah! now," said he, with a slight degree of seriousness, "I see you are laughing at me! but though you don't care about it, I *will* tell you why I am unhappy; I am afraid you think me too familiar on a first introduction. But I cannot fancy you a *new* acquaintance; and I trust when you know me better you will form a less uncharitable opinion of me than that you are now inclined to adopt."

Honorina was surprised, and a little disconcerted by the unexpected tenor of this speech, which plainly proved there was something in her manner that betrayed to Mr. Burlington, that she was not quite pleased with him. She assured him he was mistaken, but he shook his head with a half reproachful smile as he retired to his place, leaving Honorina ready to ad-

mit he was all that he had been represented to be. Nothing could be more agreeable than the hour spent at tea, round a side table placed for the party, which was augmented by Colonel Harrel and Mr. Burlington. The latter seemed anxious alone to make every body happy and pleased with themselves ; and in his exertions for that purpose he made every body pleased with him. He did not devote his exclusive attention to any individual, but all were, in a measure, if not equally exhilarated, by his animated wit ; and mirth and vivacity seemed reflected from his countenance on every person round him.

CHAPTER XVII.

And then of humour kind and free,
And bearing him to each degree,
With frank and fearless courtesy ;
There never youth was formed to steal,
Upon the heart, like brave O'Neale,

WALTER SCOTT.

HONORIA was again disengaged when they re-entered the ball room. " Miss Valency," cried a voice ; she turned round—" Sir Phillip Staines," said Mr. Burlington, presenting a gentleman he had by the arm. Sir Philip immediately requested the honour of dancing with Miss Valency, and she acquiesced with apparent good humour ; but it came not from

the heart, and her utmost efforts could not enable her to get the better of the discontent and mortification she experienced. It was so strange, so unaccountable to her, that a man who possessed the greatest desire to cultivate the friendship of her family, and declared himself obliged to them, should omit the common attention of asking her to dance, and prefer standing up with persons, who, without vanity, she might consider as inferior to her in the powers of pleasing. He was then dancing with Miss Melville, with whom for many years he had only been on terms of distant civility. What was still more provoking to Honoria, was his taking upon him to provide her with partners: all this looked so like conceitedness, that her old antipathy threatened a relapse; and, while exerting herself to conceal her real feeling, each time that her eye glanced over him, the word "*cox-*

comb" was on her tongue, and she now only wished that he would ask her to dance, that she might have the pleasure of refusing him.

The gentleman now standing opposite to her (Sir Philip Staines) was a very young man, and rather good looking, but so excessively affected that he could scarcely utter three words intelligibly. His under teeth projected very much, and he stood with his chin sticking out, and his eyes half closed, too busy thinking of himself, ever to be ready to perform his part in the dance, while he appeared lost in a kind of stupor.

Honoria was now accosted by the *witty* Jonathan, who came behind her, and asked her if she should never be tired ; then continued, " What, have not you danced with that gay spark that Harriet is run mad about ? hang me if he is not a queer one ; we have all been laughing at him ready to split

our sides. First of all, he capered away with a humpty-dumpty dwarf, then he figured off with my squeezed crabbed faced sister, and now if he has not got hold of my old friend skin and grief; hang me, but she has got more flesh and blood in her than she used to have; but this is the fellow that sets himself up for a *beau*, and fancies himself the first man in the room."

When Honoria again sat down, she resolved to dance no more, and proposed going home, but none of her party seconded her. The dancing was once more renewed, when Burlington approached her with an aspect of pleasure, exclaiming,

"Then now I may be permitted to ask you to dance with *me*."

"And I must be permitted to refuse you," returned Honoria, with an air of gaiety and *non-chalance*. "I am quite tired."

Burlington became suddenly serious; and said, in something like a piteous tone, "I have been dancing the whole evening for other peoples amusement, and now I am refused the indulgence I anticipated I might have a chance of obtaining towards the end of the night, though I dared not solicit it, while so many were intreating my interest for them; but I did not expect that Miss Valency would *pointedly* refuse to dance with Major Burlington's brother."

Honorina hardly knew how to look, or what to say; he treated her rejection in a more serious light than she had expected; and, though she was not sorry he seemed hurt, she did not wish to affront him; and, after a moment's hesitation she said, "If you had asked me before, I should have danced with you with pleasure, so you are wrong in imagining I *pointedly* re-

fuse you—but really I am now quite weary.”

“ What a wretched physiognomist I am; I fancied your countenance the very emblem of candour and truth.”

“ And pray what reason have you to impeach my veracity,” said Honoria, colouring, but attempting to laugh.

“ Why, can you now in *conscience* declare, that you really are too much exhausted to support the fatigue of another dance.”

He fixed his eyes on her with a look that would not permit her to dissemble, and she returned, casting her eyes to the ground—“ But suppose I *prefer* sitting still !”

“ *Then*, indeed, I have nothing more to say.”

Burlington pronounced these words with rather a sorrowful than a resentful aspect; and, with mortification strongly depicted on his features he retained his seat beside her in silence.

There was something very awkward in their sudden taciturnity, and, to terminate it, Honoria said,

“ Pray do not let me prevent your dancing ! See how many ladies are sitting still ; and, as you devote yourself to the amusement of others, I am sure you cannot think of remaining inactive.”

“ I should not contribute to any body’s amusement in my present mood. If you don’t choose to dance with me I shall sit still : how astonished my brother will be when I inform him of the issue of all the pleasure he promised me, and tell him that you resolutely refused to dance with me.”

“ This is really too ridiculous,” said Honoria ; but since you make such a serious matter of it I suppose I must run the risk of *expiring* with fatigue.”

She laughed as she said this ; Spencer sprung up with a bound, caught

her hand, and hurried her to her place as he exclaimed,

“ O Perseverance ! how hast thou befriended me ! ”

“ Say rather, *obstinacy*,” said Honoria.

“ Call it what you will, it has served my purpose, and now let me tell you all about——”

A drive from a passing couple stopped short his speech, and sent him precipitately to his own side ; but the next minute he was back again and continued—“ But I must tell you what a pretty dance Edgar led me ; but first, while I was pouring forth my joy and delight at so unexpectedly seeing him, and asking him a thousand questions, about how, when, and where, he was wounded, and why or wherefore he did not inform me of it, he did nothing but rave about some strange uncommon sort of people, who gave themselves the trouble of nursing him

up with all manner of good things, till they brought him to life again. Say what I would I could not get him to converse on any other subject. If he was at dinner he was sure to find out something that was not so good as he had tasted at Mrs. Valency's; if I hummed a tune, ah! how sweetly Miss Valency used to *warble* that air."

Spencer was here interrupted by a shrill voice crying out with some petulance, "Pray Mr. Burlington are you dancing or not?"

"I beg ten thousand pardons," he cried, as he turned Harriet Irby, who was resolved not to pass him unperceived, but he instantly resumed the thread of his discourse—"In short, poor Edgar so often repeated the description of the *ugly, stupid, disagreeable* people he had left at Weymouth, that—merely from curiosity I became extremely anxious to see them. I no

sooner expressed the wish, than he suggested the means of gratifying it, and off we set post haste for Weymouth. Conceive our dismay ! when we found we had taken all that trouble, merely to encounter a most provoking disappointment. Edgar immediately proposed setting off again, assuring me Weymouth was the dullest place in the world ; but I, who had never been there under happier auspices, fain would have stayed a few days to look about me ; but he never ceased worrying me till we were off again, when we returned to this neighbourhood, and I promised myself some pleasure from his society ; but no, he was continually discontented — nothing pleased, nothing amused him, till by the end of a month he had pretty nearly driven me into a state of melancholy madness by the mere force of sympathy, and I advised him by all means to go and seek his

happiness from those who had robbed him of it."

Honorina felt too much interested in these particulars not to listen with avidity; and, by her eager attention, and approving smile, encouraged Burlington's volubility.

When William Irby turned her he could not forbear saying;—"That man is the most complete *chatter-box* I ever heard, he cannot stand five minutes in his place."

"Croak, croak, croak, poor Mag!" was all Honorina said in return. At the end of the set she felt herself more than compensated for any little mortification she had experienced during the former part of the evening. As her party was preparing to retire, she requested Mr. Grantly would be kind enough to let his carriage be early next day at Mrs. Melville's.

"O you cannot possibly go to-morrow," he returned; Burlington has be-

spoken the play for that evening;—surely, Spencer,” he continued, taking hold of his arm, “you cannot permit the ladies to go and——”

“My dear Sir,” said Burlington, with mock gravity, “you forget your horses are in such a state, it would be death to them to leave the stable.”

“O true, true; yes, I assure you it is the case.”

“It is very strange,” said Honoria, laughing—“that they should all have become disordered since the day before yesterday.”

“O! a positive fact,” cried Spencer; “one is lame, another has caught cold, and the other two fell down in the staggers this morning.”

A general laugh followed this bold assertion, and Honoria found it was vain to propose departing on the morrow; she knew her mother would hardly expect her, and she was certainly doing no great violence to her

feelings, in yielding to the solicitations of her friends.

The next morning Mrs. Melville had the honour of a visit from Mr. Burlington, which she entirely ascribed to Honoria, and his desire to shew her every possible attention; but she was mistaken in imputing his civility *entirely* to that motive. He was anxious to repair his long neglect of Mrs. and Miss Melville, which, in the first instance, had wholly arisen from his averseness to meeting Sir Francis Heathcote, and his repugnance to forming an intimacy with any body likely to be allied to him; but since he had heard that the connexion was dissolved, he had wished for an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with Miss Melville, whom he had always thought extremely amiable, and now greatly approved of the effort she had made in relinquishing Sir Francis. This sentiment had prompted him, the

preceding evening, to ask her to dance. Good nature alone had induced him to become the partner of Harriet Irby; for while all his male friends were begging to be introduced to Honoria, they refused to dance with any other. When Spencer appeared in public it was always with a view of promoting other peoples pleasure as well as his own, and the greater number he could make happy, the happier he was himself.

CHAPTER. XVIII.

Such troublers of mankind ought to be hunted out of society, as a brood of porcupines who have a quill for every object, and who are never so happy as when they find that it draws blood.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

HONORIA fully expected Mr. Burlington would join their party at the play, and she was perhaps a little disappointed, when, shortly after she was seated in the theatre, she saw him enter with several ladies and gentlemen, who seemed to form his society, and nearly filled one side of the house. He seated himself between an elderly and a young lady in the stage box,

and Mr. Grantly, who was behind Honoria, informed her they had all dined at Edenvale. Mrs. and Miss Melville were in the places next Honoria, William and Jonathan filled up the seat behind. Harriet Irby had caught a violent cold at the ball, and to her infinite mortification was unable to appear, and her mother had remained at home with her.

Honoria would perhaps have been entertained with the performance, as the actors were tolerably good, had she been permitted to attend to it, but her vicinity to Jonathan Irby rendered it impossible to catch three words of the play; for what with talking, coughing, and laughing, and alternately dropping his stick, pocket handkerchief, and the play bill, and, in seeking to recover them, disturbing the whole party, he completely withheld their attention from the stage. Honoria began to wish herself quietly

seated at the cottage with her mother and sister ; a discontented sensation, bordering on irritability was fast coming over her, in proportion as the noise Jonathan made drew the eyes of the house on his party.

He was behind Miss Melville, and persecuted her with his silly observations, pronounced in an elevated tone on the actors, and not to one of them would he allow the least merit, but fancied he displayed his judgment and fine taste, in condemning all alike, and comparing them with the London actors, whom he was very proud of having seen.

“ Aye this is very well for you who have never been in London,” he continued, concluding as a thing of course, that she had never visited the capital ; and she did not take the trouble to undeceive him ; “ but how you would stare if you were to see a playhouse there ! why this whole town might

stand in it, and there are a dozen or two rows of boxes one above another, and as many pair of stairs, and then come the galleries as far as ever you can see, and the people look just the size of mice, and you might take a man's head for a gnat. Then as for the actors, there is not one but what is covered with gold and silver, and *real* diamonds, and all sorts of precious stones."

"What," cried Miss Melville in a tone of surprise, and affecting credulity, "The valets, and barbers, the cobbler of Bagdad, or even Caliban himself?"

Jonathan took no notice of this observation, but went on with his wonderful description, till his brother, for the twentieth time, implored him to be silent. William was fond of theatricals, and it was a species of torture to him to be thus disturbed.

"Now I'll *ladger* master stage-

player," said Jonathan, in an under tone. " William, I say William, what is that thing dangling from that woman's shoulder, hey?"

" Drapery, drapery; pray be silent."

" *Trapser*y, you mean," cried Jonathan, with a loud laugh; " I say William, I lay you the long odds that buck there that is strutting about in his cream-coloured hunting boots—"

" Buskins, buskins," said William.

" Well, buskin or buxom; I lay twenty to one he can't spit like a gentleman. Hang it, it is not so easy a matter; that rascally groom of Sir Francis Heathcote's cheated me out of eight guineas, pretending he could teach me to spit in the true jockey style, and hang him I can't do it now though I gave him a guinea a lesson."

Here the *accomplished* speaker let fall his snuff-box; for, in compliance with the fashion, he took, or rather

wasted, a quantity of snuff; for he had an unconquerable dislike to it, and always dropped it in its way to his nose, though he affected he could not exist without it.—The unlucky mull now rolled to the front of the box, under the ladies' feet. Jonathan immediately made most violent efforts to recover it, nor could be persuaded to wait till the act was over. Mrs. Melville and her daughter were obliged to rise; Honoria was resolved she would not; it was some time before the box could be seen; and, having once regained it, Jonathan still kept the two ladies standing while he insisted on endeavouring to recover some of the contents which had fallen out; while he declared he would rather take a pound of dust, with three grains of snuff, than go without the whole evening.

“ If it was not for you, Miss Honoria, who are always so cross, and don't

chuse to stand up just out of ill nature, I could get it all up in a moment."

Now Honoria was not at all in the way, but Jonathan addressed her thus on purpose to provoke her. Mrs. Melville seemed afraid to speak to him, and Mr. Grantly had already told him several times that he was very troublesome; but he did not mind it, and Honoria now said to him in a low tone—

"Really, Mr. Irby, if you cannot behave more like a gentleman, you will compel me to leave the theatre."

Jonathan seemed very much amused with this threat; but, as he was quiet for a little time, Honoria hoped it had had some effect on him, and she rejoiced at being permitted to fix her attention on the stage, as a very interesting scene was just passing. A most pleasing young actress was exerting herself to the utmost, and very successfully, in portraying one of the

strongest conflicts of passion, and had just got to that climax, when nothing but the dread of interrupting her would have prevented the audience from rewarding her efforts by a thunder of applause, when Jonathan Irby set up a loud hiss.

The poor young woman was overwhelmed with confusion; and, trembling in every limb, she with difficulty sustained herself. Honoria felt little less, but to have implored Jonathan to desist would only have excited him to persevere. She cast a glance towards Mr. Burlington; distress and extreme anxiety were pictured on his countenance, and he bent a look of vexation and surprise on their box; and, as the hissing continued, he suddenly started up, crying "bravo, bravo," as he clapped his hands vehemently, when a peal from the whole house soon overwhelmed the individual disapprobation; and, repeated

again and again, revived the young actress, and enabled her to go through the remainder of her part with augmented vigour.

Honorina could now breathe again ; but as she recalled the look Mr. Burlington had cast on their party, and thought of the sensation it indicated, she was ready to cry with vexation, at having appeared in public in company with a man, who not only exposed himself, but seemed to render his whole party obnoxious ; and she mentally vowed that no inducement should ever again tempt her to visit a theatre with *horrible* Jonathan Irby,

“ Mr. Burlington cannot speak to us,” thought she, “ even if he were to quit his party ; he would be ashamed to acknowledge us, and I doubt not is extremely offended that the piece which he bespoke should be so rudely interrupted.”

The unpardonable disturber made

a last effort to be heard in vain, when his folly evaporated in a silly laugh; and, composing himself against a pillar, he soon was, or pretended to be asleep.

Honoraria became impatient for the termination of the play, when she hoped her friends would be persuaded to retire without waiting for the after-piece; but, scarcely had the drop-scene fallen, when she perceived a movement in the opposite box, which was quitted by Mr. Burlington. She now forgot all about going home, and was soon after sensible that their party was augmented by the bustle behind her; but she did not look round, till she heard some one say in a half whisper, "How d'ye do, Mrs. Melville, I think those seats are intended to hold *four*."

Mrs. Melville immediately made room; Mr. Burlington stepped over, and Honoraria found him seated beside her.

With one of those smiles which certainly must have suggested the first idea of illuminating for an occasion of joy, he cried, "Thanks to my lucky stars I am here at last, at the risk of being squeezed to death I assure you; but I am come to comfort you." This was addressed to Honoria, who replied with surprise, and some reserve;

"To *comfort* me! then I am sure you have taken a great deal of unnecessary trouble; for I assure you, you could have found no one less in need of consolation on any account."

"O don't say so! but first I must tell you—and now I am going to quarrel with you again as I did last night—but I must tell you that I see plainly you are absolutely resolved to think me an insufferable coxcomb, and I do insist upon it, you do no such thing; for I am not a coxcomb, I never was a coxcomb, and I wont

be a coxcomb! and now I'll tell you what I was going to *comfort* you about. I saw your tender heart was beating, throb for throb, with that interesting young creature's, who stood trembling on the stage just now, when poor *goosey* began hissing to keep himself awake, and I want to convince you how much I am obliged to you; for I really believe I should have jumped on the stage to support the poor girl, had I not caught a glimpse of your face, when I could not determine which most demanded my commiseration; and, before my thoughts could revert to the fair Thespian, I had rallied my senses, and I put them to the best use I could at that moment by making as much noise as possible. Oh! you cannot conceive what a relief it was to my feelings to kick the front of the box almost out, and clap till my hands seemed on fire. O, I thought they had burnt my gloves,"

he added, affecting to look at them as if he really supposed they had; "only a little *singed*," he continued; "but, you are not going home to-morrow?"

"Yes, I am!"

"Then I shall go and fetch my brother, Mr. Grantly," turning to that gentleman: "I am going to fetch my brother home to-morrow; it will be quite unreasonable of you to monopolize both the ladies, and suffer the place in my curricule to remain vacant. Will you be so unfeeling as to condemn me to go alone?"

"The ladies must decide that point," said Mr. Grantly.

Burlington turned to Honoria, saying, in a voice of entreaty; "Is the genius of compassion quite silent in my behalf?"

"Hush!" cried Honoria, "we are going to have a comic song."

"Never mind a comic *song*; I am

thinking of a comic *drive* just now," said Burlington. However, he was silent till the song was over, and gave his warm applause; for he never withheld his attention or encouragement from those he saw striving to excel. He then renewed the attack, but Honoria contrived to parry his solicitations to conduct her in his carriage, and Miss Melville followed her example. Both declared they could not think of deserting Mr. Grantly: to him, therefore, Burlington applied, accusing him of a spirit of monopoly.

"I don't mind your being abusive, Master Spencer," said Mr. Grantly, jocosely; "and since you come to *that*, I don't know that I should be justified in permitting either of my charges to accept the guidance of such a passionate rogue; who, if they chance to provoke him, might overturn them into a ditch, and then what would Mrs. Valency say?"

“ O, I know exactly what Mrs. Valency would say; you may laugh,” continued Burlington, observing Honoria smile; “ but I *do* know Mrs. Valency perfectly well, and her picture is so completely formed in my mind, that if I was to meet her in the street I should certainly recognize her; and, judging of me by my brother, I know she would say, that such a gentle, meek, quiet young man, might be trusted with any body any where. I will tell her how you have used me, and I know she will take my part. But I am resolved I will not go in the curricule: if I am not to have a companion, I’ll take my horse and sulk all the way.”

“ But your brother will return with you,” said Honoria.

“ O no, I am sure I shall not be able to get him away; but, good heavens! the farce is beginning! now you have brought me into a fine scrape

again with the good people over the way, for I must not stir while the performance is going on."

The first act passed with only a slight interruption from the old quarter? Jonathan suddenly began to snore; his brother gave him no very gentle push; and, after a little snorting, he slept quietly again. Burlington was obliged to hold his head down for some time before he could overcome his excessive inclination to laugh aloud, while Honoria concealed her irresistible mirth with her fan; for she could now *laugh* at what, but a short time before, would have put her almost in a passion. As soon as the act was concluded, she said to Burlington—

"Now, you may hasten to your friends; so don't accuse me any longer of detaining you."

"You need not be in such a hurry to get rid of me," said he, "I was going

to say something, and you have put it quite out of my head. O, why have not you been to see Edenvale? it is one of the *Lions* of the neighbourhood; and, if you did not choose to come when I was at home, I could go out, or at least send you word I was gone, and pop out by *accident* from some sly nook. I know you wont come now, but I hope at some future period to have the happiness of entertaining yourself and family, as I could wish."

He continued conversing till the curtain again rose, nor did he rejoin his party till the performance was just over.

As William Irby was conducting Honoria from the theatre, he said; "Of all the men I ever saw, *that* Mr. Burlington possesses the greatest portion of cool impudence. I was astonished at the ease, I had almost called it *audacity*, with which he contrived to get a place between you and

Mrs. Melville; a thing *I* never thought of attempting, though *I* was of your party."

"Yes," returned Honoria, "it is amazing what some people can do with perfect propriety, while others set about it so awkwardly, that they are sure to meet a rebuff. *Manner* is every thing on those occasions."

"*Manner!*" echoed William, resentfully; "*impudence*, downright consummate *impudence!* it merits no better name."

"Yet I much question," said Honoria, "if, in the whole circle of Mr. Burlington's acquaintance, you will find one person who will allow that he deserves that imputation."

"I don't care what they allow, I can judge for myself."

"Well," cried Honoria, good humouredly, "I think you'll change your opinion some day or other. I rather suspect you will become very partial

to him when you know him better. His conversation and humour will suit your taste, I am sure ; and you are too liberal to withhold your approbation when justice demands it."

William said he should be very happy to do Mr. Burlington justice, and that he thought he was doing so when he declared that at present he saw nothing to approve of in him ; and, he added emphatically, "It pained me, Honoria, to see you cast on him

Those eyes affectionate, and glad,

That seem to love whate'er they look upon."

She appeared to overlook the energy of his manner, though she coloured deeply, but immediately talked of something else.

CHAPTER XIX.

Si'l y a un amour pur et exempt du mélange de nos outre passions, c'est celui qui est caché au fond du cœur, et que nous ignorons nous-même.

DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT.

EARLY the next morning, Honoria and Elizabeth left—with Mr. Grantly, who was to conduct them the whole of the way, as he was going on a visit to a family in their neighbourhood. As they drove out of the town they called to inquire after Harriet Irby, and found she was still too much indisposed to admit of her returning home. Mr. Burlington had neither been seen, or heard of, that morning,

and Honoria, after watching the road for some miles, and making her eyes ache with stretching them in various directions, began to think it very tedious, and to feel that species of lassitude and dejection we frequently experience after any extraordinary pleasure. She thought the time which they stopped to refresh the horses at the end of the first stage would never have expired, nor did her spirits revive, till she caught sight of the cottage; when her eyes began to sparkle, and she looked anxiously for her mother and sister, who she thought would be on the watch for her. She was not disappointed; they were standing at the gate with Major Burlington. By the joy of this meeting one might have imagined the separation had extended to four years instead of four days. Mr. Grantly was obliged to decline Mrs. Valency's pressing invitation to dine; and, as his carriage

drove off, the remaining party walked round the house to enter through the viranda.

The Major asked Honoria how she had left his brother, and if she had a letter for him? Honoria was going to reply as she entered the parlour, but started on perceiving a gentleman lounging on the sofa with a book in his hand. A general laugh followed her exclamation of "*Mr. Burlington,*" as he flew forward; and, shaking her by the hand, bade her welcome, and begged she would make herself quite at home.

There is perhaps no surer method of ascertaining how a person is affected towards one, than by suddenly presenting oneself before them when totally unexpected; for the countenance will inevitably betray the real feelings excited by the occasion. Certainly Burlington must have felt gratified at the pleasure apparent on

Honorina's features : as he led her to a seat, he continued—

“They compelled me to sit still, in order that I might *surprise* you ; and I thought the best way of doing so effectually, was to take my book, and sit with becoming ease, as if I was an established inmate of the mansion.”

It appeared, on explanation, that Mr. Burlington had set off on horseback early in the morning ; and, for some time, had ridden slowly, expecting Mr. Grantly's carriage to overtake him ; but his patience being exhausted, he determined to precede them. Being pretty certain his brother would be at the cottage, he had ventured to call at the door to inquire for him, when the Major had ushered him into the presence of Mrs. Valency, to whom Spencer announced himself as the *avant courier* of the ladies.

After what has already appeared, it is perhaps scarcely necessary to apprize the reader, that it was *Ella*, who had made a strong impression on the tender heart of Major Burlington. Her heroic resignation of Sir Francis, had first excited his wonder and admiration, which speedily increased to a more lively sentiment ; though, in justice, to the Major it must be observed, that when he resolved to unveil the character of Sir Francis, he was not certain which of the two sisters was the object of the Baronet's pursuit, nor was he aware of the state of his own heart, until after he left Weymouth ; and, in absence, he learnt to appreciate the charms of her society. He had no reservations from his brother, who consoled him with the suggestion, that although Miss Valency might find it impossible so soon to admit a second object to her favour, he might by degrees

gain on her affections by a series of nameless assiduities. The Major did not now like to admit that Ella ever had been attached to Sir Francis, but tried to persuade himself that it had been at the instigation of her friends that she favoured him; and, that had the match ever taken place, it would have been one of policy, rather than of love. However, his extreme impatience to ascertain how far he might have a chance of succeeding, prompted his return to Weymouth, and subsequent visit to the cottage. He soon perceived that some astonishment was excited, when it appeared that he meant to continue in the neighbourhood, with no other object but that of profiting by their society, and this indulgence he was certain he should not be permitted, unless he at once declared the nature of his views; for he could detect that degree of caution in Mrs. Valency's manner, which de-

manded, that in justice to himself, he should be totally unreserved.

On the morning when Ella and Honoria had surprised him listening with such interest to Elizabeth, Ella's praise had been the theme ; and when on the same day he had walked apart with Mrs. Valency, he had hinted to her the nature of his sentiments ; and, subsequent to the departure of Honoria and Elizabeth, he had fully explained his hopes, his wishes, and designs. He informed Mrs. Valency that five hundred a year was all that he inherited as a younger son ; but, on the day his brother had become of age, he had made it one thousand, and had also presented him with his majority. Mrs. Valency neither encouraged nor repressed the Major's hopes, but referred him entirely to the daughter, though she acknowledged his profession was in her eyes a serious objection ; yet if Ella, on reflec-

tion, and a further acquaintance with Major Burlington, thought her happiness would be promoted by a union with him, she should not oppose it. He assured Mrs. Valency he was not so unreasonable as to suppose her daughter could immediately decide on such an important point, and he only requested to be permitted to visit on a footing of intimacy, that he might endeavour to ingratiate himself into her favour. To this Mrs. Valency did not object, and she resolved, the first opportunity, to speak to Ella on the subject; as from some embarrassment in her manner, and a greater degree of seriousness than usual, she rather suspected her of an inclination to favour the Major, and that she was on that account angry with herself.

On the Major's declaring he should not attend the ball, a suspicion of the truth, which it must be owned had before been excited, was considerably

strengthened in Ella's mind, and she felt extremely provoked with herself for the pleasure she experienced at the suggestion. It is certain that, in some cases, the heart is not the less susceptible of forming a second attachment, just at the period it has made an effort to overcome a former prepossession. In this instance, Ella's heart and mind were at variance; for though fully inclined to appreciate the amiable character and interesting manners of Major Burlington, she shrunk with repugnance from the most distant idea of so soon forming a new connexion. When her mother observed to her, with a smile, that Major Burlington's *friendship* for her family was of the quickest growth she had ever known—Ella replied, that some persons' affections were livelier than others, and they could admit a whole family to their regard, while another was scanning the merits of

an individual. Mrs. Valency further said, that she thought the merits of an *individual* had secured the Major's friendship for her whole family.

Ella could not misunderstand her, though she affected to do so, while her confusion betrayed her.

“ Have you any objection to Major Burlington's visiting us for the present on the footing of a friend ? ” asked Mrs. Valency.

“ Certainly not, as a *friend*,” returned Ella, with an aspect much too serious to pass for indifference ; “ and, of *course*, my dear mother, you cannot do me so great an injustice as to imagine, that in my present state of mind, I could endure to consider him in any other light.”

Ella did not feel satisfied on perceiving that her mother smiled, while Mrs. Valency augured much in favour of the Major, as she reflected that it

was the first time she had ever known Ella to be disingenuous.

The Major seemed perfectly to understand the mode of attack by covert means; his brother might better have achieved a capture by *coup-de-main*; but the Major, by imperceptible, but sure degrees, made considerable progress in his design.

Nothing could be more agreeable than the party now assembled, or more pleasing than to contemplate the perfect harmony that existed between the brothers, though varying so considerably in their cast of character. One was the soothing dulcet tone that composes the spirit, and charms the ear; the other that rapid melody which seems to combine all concord in one wonderful effort of execution, and equally delights and astonishes the senses.

Ella could not resist quietly observing to Honoria, that she should

never have known Mr. Burlington by the description she had given of him in her letter. Honoria looked a little foolish, but soon rallied, and laughing, said, she had forgotten to take her spectacles to church with her.

As they were all surrounding the tea table, Burlington exclaimed ; “ Now this is *real* comfort ; I could fancy I had just found a mother and sisters, and that, for the first time, I was perfectly at home.”

The genuine satisfaction that dictated this speech, diffused itself throughout the party, and each betrayed some indication of their sympathy in Mr. Burlington’s feelings, while Mrs. Valency declared herself highly flattered by the manner in which he had expressed them. Burlington resumed ;

“ I must congratulate myself on being so fortunate in this instance, for you cannot think how frequently it is

a subject of regret to me, when I reflect how many charming, agreeable people there are in the world, whom it is impossible I ever *can* be acquainted with ; and, what is still more provoking, one may be in the very same town with them, without suspecting what a gratification one is depriving oneself of by not seeking their society. Then again, ceremony and etiquette interfere and keep the most congenial persons strangers all their lives ; I could sometimes find in my heart to sit down and write to every person of whom I have heard an exalted character ; I feel so mortified at the thoughts that I can never be known to them ; but, particularly after having read some work, in which I have found sentiments exactly consonant with my own, delivered in the most animated language ; O ! I can scarcely forbear seizing a pen, and introducing myself to the author, and imploring him to

rank me among the number of his friends."

"At all events," observed Mrs. Valency, "you escape the disappointment which in many cases you would doubtless encounter; for rarely will you find the person answering in every respect, to the portrait formed of them in an enthusiastic imagination."

"O! I have been so fortunate of late," cried Burlington, "that I shall be more sanguine than ever."

Honorina now no longer felt the effects of recent dissipation; on the contrary, she never enjoyed herself more, nor did she feel the least weary when at a late hour she retired with her sister. Ella did not seem so anxious as usual to receive a particular account of every thing that had occurred in Honorina's absence, or in her turn to impart a similar communication. The Admiral was expected the next day, to spend a few weeks previous to his

going to town, where he always passed the winter: not the *London* winter, viz. May, June, and July; but, the old-fashioned, hoary, gloomy season of December, January, and February, that our forefathers thought the fittest period in which to seek warmth, comfort, and society in the precincts of a crowded city.

Honorina found her sister inclined to rally her about Mr. Burlington, and her misrepresentation of his personal appearance, but she soon silenced her, and secured her attention, by repeating what he had said respecting his brother, their expedition to Weymouth, &c. Ella immediately became serious, and when Honorina openly spoke of the Major's predilection, Ella grew agitated, and at length burst into tears, and accused her sister of cruelty in talking to her on such a subject, when she knew how much she had lately suffered in weaning her

heart from the object of its first affections. Honoria was astonished : it was the first time she had ever heard Ella allude in such pathetic terms to her attachment to Sir Francis, and though at the very period of her resignation of him, she had looked vexed and unhappy, Honoria had never seen her shed a tear ; nor appear at all affected at any subsequent mention of him till the present occasion. She affectionately apologized for what she had said, and less versed in the knowledge of the heart than her mother, she really began to apprehend that poor Ella's attachment to Sir Francis would cast a lasting shade over her happiness, and induce her to persevere in leading a single life.

CHAPTER XX.

On ne sut en l'aiment ce qu'on cherit le plus
 De son ame ou de son genie :
 Par ses noble talents il irrita l'envie,
 Et la soumit par ses vertus.—

TO avoid prolixity, or dwelling upon symptoms, the issue of which may be easily foreseen, we will pass over three months, and see by the aspect of the scene at the end of that period, what grounds Honoria had for her apprehensions, touching her sister's happiness. That sister was again on the eve of marriage! so much for Major Burlington's quiet mode of attack, though it must be allowed that he found a strong auxiliary in the Admi-

ral, who espoused his cause with great warmth, and who was not without a hope that there might be a double union of the families; for Mr. Spencer Burlington spent more of his time in the vicinity of the cottage, than he did at Edenvale. He had purchased a piece of land near the borders of the ocean, and within half a mile of Mrs. Valency's, where he was erecting a small villa, which he called his marino, and his attention to that object afforded a continual excuse for his being in the neighbourhood. He seemed charmed with the prospect of his brother's nuptials, and by his manner it might naturally have been inferred that he too would willingly have been a bridegroom; for though he sometimes checked himself, he oftener particularized Honoria by a sort of spontaneous assiduity, which seemed to spring so genuinely from the heart, as to defy controul, and betrayed the evidence

of an attachment, which however had not as yet explained itself in words. Honoria had often seen men, whom she thought she could have loved, had it not been for a certain something she was sure to discover in them before she had been three times in their company. What it was she was seldom very eloquent in explaining, but she had now passed the greater part of three months in the society of Spencer Burlington, without being able to find out any thing to disapprove of in him ; on the contrary, he was continually betraying some amiable and exalted trait of character, which daily endeared him more and more to her, nor could she resist loving him with all the fervour of a mind enthusiastically alive to perfection.

Ella had for some time withstood her prepossession in favour of the Major, which even in its earliest stage had more of genuine love in it than

the most lively sentiment Sir Francis had ever been able to excite in her heart; and which, from never having felt more at that period, she had mistaken for what it only slightly resembled. Her intimacy with Major Burlington was not many weeks old, when she felt, that had duty, or adverse circumstances, called on her to resign him, her feelings would have widely differed from those which had enabled her so heroically to give up Sir Francis.

Ella was induced to consent to the marriage taking place earlier than she could have wished, by the Major's pathetic representation of the misery he should endure if compelled to rejoin his regiment in Portugal before he could call her his own; and it was uncertain how long he could with propriety remain absent from his military duty, as his health, though it was the *ostensible*, was no longer the *virtual*

plea for his continuing at home. The troops were at that period resting inactive in their winter cantonment, and the Major felt perfectly justified in permitting himself some indulgence after the severe sufferings he had endured in his last campaign.

Miss Melville, who had been at home for some weeks, was to return to the cottage to be present at the approaching joyful occasion. Poor Harriet Irby had never recovered the effects of the ball; her mother had contrived to get her home, but she had continued so much indisposed that it was apprehended her lungs were affected, and it was just decided that she should be taken by easy journeys to Clifton. Her brothers were to *follow*, for they were unwilling to lose the festivities that were to take place at the cottage on the marriage of Miss Valency, which were to be blended

with those of the jovial Christmas season.

How merry were the faces, how full of glee the hearts, that surrounded Mrs. Valency's table on Christmas day? the spirit of ancient hospitality seemed to have taken shelter in her cottage, and chastened revelry supported her old companion, while "laughter holding both her sides" devoted the reunion. No distortion was now seen in the Admiral's features, all was cheerful serenity: even Jonathan Irby looked content, and allowed that the dinner was well cooked, neither did he ask for any thing that did not happen to be there. Spencer Burlington was the very spirit of glee, his amiability had long since dissolved all William Irby's prejudices against him, and they were now most particular friends. William's passion for Honoria having by a sort of natural retrogradation, re-

ceded in proportion as he perceived Spencer rapidly gaining on her affections, so by degrees his slender hopes entirely died away, and he generally attached himself to Miss Melville, to which he was led, in the first instance, because neither of the other young ladies would attend to him; but he soon found *that* in Elizabeth which could claim regard for her own sake.

The day after Christmas day Major Burlington was made happy in the possession of his lovely bride, with whom he immediately set off for Edenvale, where every thing was prepared to receive them as the master and mistress of the mansion, in the absence of the real master, who paid them every possible compliment save that of attending them. He insisted on Edenvale being their home till they should have one of their own, which he persuaded his brother not to think of while he remained in the army. Mrs.

Valency concluded that Mr. Burlington was erecting the marino to present to his brother, till she found by his conversation that he intended occupying it himself, and talked of spending great part of his time there. The suggestion that followed was very natural, and such as to make her rejoice in the intimacy of Spencer Burlington with her family, which she had at times been inclined to regret, from an apprehension that he might have no serious intentions, while her daughter's peace was becoming endangered. But the footing his brother was on rendered it difficult to make a distinction between them, while Spencer's manners and behaviour made it an impossibility.

Spencer had no *acquaintances*, for every one who knew him became his friend. On the plea of inspecting the erection of his marino, he had retained a lodging in a farm-house ad

jacent, and regularly every morning bent his steps to the cottage. The Admiral was still there, and always gave him a flattering welcome. There was an endearing familiarity in Spencer's address that could not be resisted; Mrs. Valency really felt for him the affection of a mother, and often blamed herself for the indulgence of her demeanour towards him, which, nevertheless, she could not redress. As to Honoria, she *tried* (but certainly very unsuccessfully) to conceal the joy she always experienced at sight of him, the delight his society afforded her, and the sudden evaporation of her spirits the moment he disappeared; when she would sigh deeply, feel miserable, and return without zest to her customary employments, and pursue them with weariness and distaste.

Spencer would have been more than human, could he have resisted

presuming a little on his influence at the cottage ; he would come in of a morning, and seeing them all employed, would exclaim, as he scattered their work about to clear a place for himself near Honoria—

“ O, what a delightful litter ! you all look so comfortable ; books, work, drawing, such a deal to do ; not a single space left for *ennui* to creep in at.”

Honoria could have told him that *ennui* only waited for his place, and the moment he departed was sure to pop in and keep as close to her as he himself did. But though Spencer expressed such admiration of their industry, he never was content till he had at least contrived to make Honoria lay aside her occupation, and devote all her attention to him. She must either read a play with him, sing a duet, or they must all walk with him to his marino. The young

ladies must accept each an arm, while the Admiral trudged forward with Mrs. Valency. Sometimes Honoria declined, for she had now her moments of serious uneasiness inseparable from so lively an attachment. Why did not Spencer explain himself fully? why was not his language as unequivocal as his looks and manners. These ideas prompted her at times to make an effort to avoid his attentions, but she was sure to repent of it. Spencer never offered her his arm *twice*; but when she refused it, he looked as if she had done him an irreparable injury. His countenance lost all its animation, and he became totally silent, except when interrogated; when, though he would answer with that obliging good humour which never forsook him, it was in the low voice of dejection, and with an undisguised aspect of mortification. So violent a contrast to his habitual manner was

sure to be apparent to every one, and Honoria was glad to make a hill or rough place in the road an excuse for availing herself of his support, unsolicited, and restoring his smiles. Thus it was, his dominion over her daily gained strength; for she could not bear to see him look unhappy, or to deprive herself of the charms of his animating conversation. He was continually requesting her opinion in the constructions of his *marino*, and was sure to abide by her decision, while he was always anticipating the period of its completion. He was the supporter and life of all the parties and *fêtes* given at the season: nothing could go forward without Mr. Spencer Burlington, while few hesitated to assert that he was speedily to be united to Honoria.

CHAPTER XXI.

Silent he loved : in every gaze
Was passion—friendship in his phrase.

SCOTT.

SUCH was the posture of affairs, when Burlington one morning appeared at the cottage with a blank aspect, and informed its inhabitants that he had just received a letter from his most particular friend, Lord Brookland, whom they had often heard him mention, and who was then at Bath in the deepest affliction. From what cause Spencer did not explain, but said his lordship had written to implore him to come to him ; and he could not hesitate a moment in com-

plying with his request, and affording him all the consolation friendship could bestow. Burlington seemed much dejected, and his gloom soon communicated itself to all present. The Admiral's countenance began to contract, and his features appeared to be catching in each other as he tried to restrain the slight convulsion that agitated them, more and more in proportion as the idea gained upon his mind, that Mr. Burlington was going off without any explanation, and was leaving them quite in the dark as to his future intentions ; he mentioned no fixed period for his return ; it was possible he might meet with some gay heiress at Bath that would put Honoria out of his head, and she might never hear more of him in the light of a lover. The Admiral became absolutely dumb, there was no possibility of extorting an answer from him : he either did not hear, or affected to be

deaf to whatever was addressed to him ; while, having taken up a book (his old resource) he hung moodily over it, and looked as if he was making faces at its contents.

Mrs. Valency felt very uncomfortable ; not that her mind could harbour a suspicion injurious to Mr. Burlington, of whom she entertained the highest opinion, and believed him to be devoted to Honoria, and that his reasons for not being more explicit would ultimately be explained ; but she felt unhappy on account of Honoria's present feelings, and the anxiety she must necessarily endure in his absence. She had never questioned her as to the state of her heart, for that was quite superfluous ; and they had both, with one accord, avoided the subject.

Honoria was now making a vigorous effort to appear perfectly composed and cheerful, but no one se-

conded her attempt. Burlington was silent and abstracted, and looked surprised and hurt when she affected to laugh, as if he wondered she should feel so different to what he did. He had ordered his horses to be brought to the cottage in half an hour, when he intended proceeding to Edenvale to sleep that night, and continue his journey to Bath the next day. Honoria was busied in collecting some pamphlets, books, and music, of Mr. Burlington's; when he approached, and she asked him if his servant would be able to take them?

“ O, let them remain here till I return,” said he; “ why are you in such a hurry to get rid of every vestige of me?”

Till I return! how sweet to the ears of Honoria! She evaded the question that followed, and he resumed :

“ Only let it remain here, and I

will come and fetch it myself: meantime it will make you think of me sometimes; but you will not be glad to see me again, you care so little about my going, that I am half inclined to think you are indifferent whether I ever come back; I should wish my marino at the bottom of the sea if I thought you would not make me welcome when I return."

"You do *not* think any such thing," said Honoria, "so I need not trouble myself to make professions on the occasion."

"Then you *will* be glad to see me, and you will not receive me with coldness and reserve, and look as if you had forgotten who I was, or appear as indifferent as you did just now when I talked of my departure?"

"O, I shall make no promises; but I rather think you do not entertain apprehensions of any great magnitude on that head."

“ If I did I should be the most miserable man in existence,” said Burlington with serious energy: at that moment his horses were announced, and having insisted, as the privilege of relationship, on a parting salute from each of the ladies; and caught Honoria to his heart, with a fervent “ God bless you!” he hastened away, and was swiftly borne from their pursuing eyes.

Honoria was the first to return into the house; she felt a suffocating sensation in her throat as she re-entered the room she had quitted with Burlington: there were the books, the music, the pamphlets, but where was their owner? She burst into tears, and ran up to her chamber to conceal a weakness she was ashamed of, but could not controul.

The next day the Admiral set off for London, and as he had not spoken above ten words since Mr. Burlington

had announced his departure, his absence did not much increase the gloom which now pervaded the scene. Miss Melville had returned home a few days before, and Mrs. Valency and Honoria were left to entertain each other.

It was now that they felt the loss of Ella's society, nor was Honoria so capable of supplying this deficiency to her mother as she would once have been ; for she could not recover her spirits, nor conceal the uneasiness of her mind. Had Spencer been more explicit, she could have borne his absence with comparative ease ; but she now felt as if she had every thing to fear, and slight foundation for hope. He had not said that he would write, yet she thought it probable he would commence a correspondence with her mother, and eagerly watched each post ; but all they heard of him was through Ella, who mentioned in her

letters that he had written to his brother from Bath; and had spoken most affectionately of them all, and regretted that the calls of friendship must, for a time, alienate him from their happy and beloved circle. Ella added a pressing invitation to her mother and sister, to spend a short time with her at Edenvale.

The contents of this letter proved very gratifying to them both, but Mrs. Valency felt reluctant to take Honoria to Edenvale, lest Mr. Burlington should return unexpectedly while they were there, when it would look too much like throwing her in his way. The nature of her scruples she acknowledged in her answer to Ella. Honoria could now again walk to the marino, and watch its progress with pleasure: for the last few days she had not visited it, for she had felt angry with Spencer, and would not do any thing she thought would be gra-

tifying to him; but now she concluded that he would not be absent long, and therefore thought it superfluous to write to her mother, knowing he should hear of them through Ella. Honoria was not quite satisfied with thus accounting for it, but she was glad to find an excuse for him. A short time only elapsed before they again heard from Ella. She assured them Spencer would not return from Bath for some time, as he could not possibly leave his friend, Lord Brookland, who was in the deepest affliction on account of his wife, who was in a dying state. Ella again importuned her mother to visit her, she had never before been separated from her and Honoria; she was anxious that they should partake of the pleasure she enjoyed in her sumptuous residence, and desirous that they should contemplate her happiness.

Mrs. Valency no longer demurred;

she was certain she might venture to spend a week or ten days at Edenvale, without running any risk of being surprised by Mr. Burlington ; it was accordingly determined they should go, and they set off the next morning ; Honoria in high spirits, both at the thoughts of seeing her sister, and of visiting an abode where, in her eyes, every object would possess a peculiar interest.

CHAPTER XXII.

The soul too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere ;
And sought in better world the meed
To blameless life by Heaven decreed.

ROKEBY.

THEY reached Edenvale before daylight had disappeared; and Honoria was almost out of breath with uttering exclamations of admiration before the carriage stopped. No sooner had the first joy of re-union with her sister subsided, than her eyes wandered round the magnificent apartment, then rested on the elegant decorations, while she gave due credit to the taste which had selected them. Nothing

could be more satisfactory to Mrs. Valency than to witness the happiness which Ella seemed to have secured by her union with Major Burlington. He was a most doting husband, nor was she less ardently attached to him; their mutual study was to promote each other's gratification, and they seemed to derive their own from the consciousness of bestowing it. Ella felt perfectly happy in the small circle that now surrounded her, and only wished, for Honoria's sake, that Spencer had been present.

Before breakfast the next morning Honoria wandered through several of the chief apartments, not being able to restrain her curiosity till her sister could accompany her, which she had promised to do. She found herself at length in an extensive library, the walls entirely lined with books; and in the middle stood an enormous table, crowded with chemical appa-

ratus, mathematical instruments, &c. From thence she passed into a lesser room, more conspicuous for comfort than magnificence, and apparently intended for a *boudoir* or study; here were several glass cases full of natural curiosities, forming quite a little museum. Within this was a large, light airy chamber and dressing-room, not much differing from the others she had seen; nor could she perceive any thing to challenge her particular attention, except a diminutive print, which she espied pinned to the paper, just over the dressing-table, and which had evidently been cut out of a pocket-book. On examining it she found it to be a view of their cottage, which, from its picturesque appearance, had often been taken as an ornament for literary repositories. Honoria felt not the least inclination to purloin it; but, on the contrary, was perfectly satisfied that it should re-

main where it was. She now hurried down to breakfast, and, finding that she was late, confessed what had been her employment, and asked to whose use the chamber was appropriated where she had seen the little picture of the cottage. The Major cast a sly glance at her as he said, "Now, Honoria, you know that question is superfluous; why could not you have candidly observed, 'I suppose that is Spencer's room!'"

"I am sure I should not have said *Spencer!* I might perhaps as well have said, 'I suppose that is Mr. Burlington's apartment!'"

"Well, my demure Miss Prudentia," continued the Major, "who after all have betrayed that you have been visiting a young gentleman's chamber: for your satisfaction or dissatisfaction, that is Mr. Burlington's apartment, which with those adjoining are appropriated to his particular

use; it is very extraordinary, that of all places in the house you should happen to have got there!"

"Don't be ridiculous," cried Honoria, colouring deeply, and continued to her sister, "Indeed, Ella, I think you use your brother-in-law very ill, in suffering him to retain that little shabby view of the cottage; you might as well have taken a drawing from it, and presented it to him."

"I am very glad you thought of it," said Ella, "for that will be a charming employment for you while you are here, and keep you out of mischief, and from wandering into such *strange* places."

Honoria carried off her embarrassment with a laugh, but said she would have nothing to do with the drawing, unless Ella would take the credit of it.

"Indeed, I shall not tell any stories about it," said Ella.

“ Well, then, I will draw it for *you*,” returned Honoria, “ and you may do what you like with it.”

After breakfast they set off on a walk through the grounds, but had scarcely emerged from the house when Honoria observed a beautiful horse galloping towards them from a distant part of the park. He made directly for the spot where they stood, kicking up, and plunging forward, to Honoria’s great terror; and she took refuge behind the Major, with some exclamations of alarm, as the animal pranced round and round them.

“ Don’t be frightened,” cried Ella, “ Rinaldo is the gentlest creature in the world, he is only delighted to see us; I had quite forgotten him—I generally bring him a piece of bread.”

The Major ran back for it, while Ella patted the elegant animal, who had suddenly become perfectly tame. Mrs. Valency expressed some appre-

hension at seeing her so familiar with him; when Ella informed her that this fine creature had been made quite a pet of by Spencer, who had bred him up on purpose for a charger for his brother, to whom he had presented him on the day he had spent at Edenvale on his way to Bath. Every fine day, even in winter, Rinaldo was led out of his stable, and permitted the indulgence of ranging the park. Spencer had taught him to expect a piece of bread whenever he appeared, and often attracted him to the parlour windows to seek it. The Major and Ella had, by the same means, contrived to make acquaintance with Rinaldo. Honoria now ventured to stroke his forehead; but as soon as he perceived the Major approaching with a roll in each hand, he began neighing and trotting round him, but took the bread so gently, that not one of the ladies were afraid to feed him.

“ You will not be surprised at his being so tractable, when I tell you that Spencer has taught him all these pretty ways, and many funny tricks besides, which he would make him display if he were here.”

“ O beautiful, wise Rinaldo !” ejaculated Honoria, as she continued stroking him.

“ Aye, *poor* Rinaldo,” said the Major, patting his neck with some vehemence, “ your old master will not like to see you going off to be shot at.”

“ O ! do not talk of it,” cried Ella, piteously, as she clung faster to her husband’s arm, as if she feared to lose him that moment ; nor could she for some time recover the impression of what would be *his* peril when Rinaldo should be exposed. Her mother and sister sympathized in her feelings ; and, had they encouraged the sensation that affected them, they would

have wept as they gazed on Rinaldo, now again flying over the park.

“ While the little party pursue their walk we will stand quietly admiring Rinaldo, as we have no inclination just now to traverse the oft trod mazes of the picturesque, or dwell on the exhausted theme of Chinese bridges, gothic temples, *modern ruins*, or hermitages embowered in imperious shade.”

Honorina did not return in time to begin her drawing that day; but the next morning she set about it, after having been laughed at unmercifully for very seriously requesting the Major would get the little print for her out of his brother's room, as if scrupulous about revisiting the chamber. Mrs. and Miss Melville, and Mr. Grantly, were frequent visitors at Edenvale, as well as many other persons, whom it is unnecessary to particularize. A week soon passed over;

the drawing was finished, on an enlarged scale, and put in the place of the little picture; and Honoria had become extremely familiar with Rinaldo, to whom she failed not to pay her compliments every day, while she secretly regretted that Spencer had parted with him, though from so amiable a motive; but he had been long his favourite, and therefore must be her's.

She was charmed with that neighbourhood; for there was not a cottage she could look into that did not resound the praises of Mr. Burlington, and she delighted to hear the theme expatiated on. He had now been absent a month. He had not written very lately to his brother; but his last letter had informed them, that Lady Brookland was at length released from her sufferings. He had not spoken of his return, nor indeed touched on any subject but the melancholy event he announced; and his

friends did not think it at all probable he would leave Lord Brookland at such a time.

Honorina was standing at the window on the morning previous to that fixed on for her departure from Edenvale, when she perceived a man galloping across the park towards the house. She pointed him out to the Major, who, as the horseman drew nearer, exclaimed with some surprise, not unmixed with alarm, "He looks very like Sterling, my brother's man——it certainly is him."

"I am sure it is," cried Honorina, who was no stranger to the valet's person; and she waited in much agitation while the Major went to meet and question the domestic.

"I hope Mr. Burlington is not on his return," said Mrs. Valency, with apprehension; "I should be sorry he were to arrive while we were inmates of his house."

“ Why should you be sorry?” said Ella; “ as we do not expect him he cannot impute your visit to any thing flattering to him; and I am sure he will be delighted to see you, he has so often expressed a wish that you could be prevailed on to visit Edenvale.”

Honorina could hardly tell whether she *hoped* or *feared* most, that Mr. Burlington might be approaching. All doubts on the subject were terminated, when the Major re-entered, saying, “ My brother is within a few miles of us; he sent on Sterling to apprise us he should be here in less than an hour.”

“ How unfortunate!” cried Mrs. Valency, with a look of vexation.

“ Unfortunate! my dear madam,” echoed the Major, whose joyous aspect denoted his sensations; “ unfortunate! surely you mean to omit the first syllable! He will be overjoyed

to find you here. Honoria," he continued, approaching her, and playfully stroking her cheek, "where do you buy your *rouge*? it is of the finest tint I ever saw. Ella must get some at the same place."

"I did before I was married," cried Ella; "Messrs. Burlington supply the best rouge in the kingdom."

This speech immediately attracted the Major to Ella's side, from whence he was never long absent; and, having whispered something which proved that Ella had not quite left off the Burlington rouge, he resumed his attack on Honoria, observing,—

"Look, how serious Honoria is *trying* to appear! we must not make her angry, Ella, for I expect she will very shortly turn you and me out of Edenvale, without any ceremony; so we must keep her in good humour for our own sakes."

"I rather think the first person I

turn out will be myself," said Honoria.

" And I can answer for it," returned the Major, " that *that* will be the *last* person you are allowed to turn out when the master of the mansion appears ; to whom, you know, we must all submit."

Honoria was glad to escape to her chamber ; for she dreaded being present at the moment of Spencer's arrival, as she knew he would not expect to see them, as the Major had not written to him since her mother and self had arrived at Edenvale ; but, while inactively watching the lapse of each minute, it appeared insupportably tedious ; and she repaired to the library, and endeavoured to dissipate her thoughts by turning them on some of the many objects which there presented themselves calculated to command attention. She encountered the Major in her way there ; and he again

provoked her, by telling her not to be impatient, for that the hour had not yet elapsed. But a few minutes now terminated her suspense; the sound of a carriage drew her to the window, from whence, unperceived, she beheld Spencer descend from his travelling chaise, and affectionately embrace his brother and Ella, who were on the steps to receive him. They entered the house together, and Honoria caught up a book and sat down close to the fire, and appeared to be studying very intently; for, as the Major knew where she was, she doubted not he would conduct his brother to her; and soon she heard their voices, as they approached along the gallery. As he laid his hand on the lock the Major said,

“I don’t think you look well Spencer; but I will give you a panacea for all your complaints.”

He threw open the door, and Ho-

norcia, with a throbbing heart, arose to welcome Burlington, who, she concluded, was prepared to see her; but she instantly perceived that the Major had resolved to surprise him: and that he *was surprised*, indeed! Mr. Burlington's aspect sufficiently denoted—but certainly *not agreeably!*

CHAPTER XXIII.

What spectre can the charnel send,
So dreadful as an injured friend ?

WE have already observed, that unexpectedly to appear before a person was an excellent way of ascertaining their feelings towards one. The utmost effort of self-delusion could not have persuaded Honoria on the present occasion, that Mr. Burlington was glad to see her. He started back really aghast, turned extremely pale, nor could in any degree command his countenance ; but rapidly recollecting himself, he hurried forward with extended hand, declared he was delighted to see her, and that nothing could have made him happier than her ho-

nouring Edenvale with her presence. While he spoke, his colour returned to excess, and he thanked his brother for the charming surprise he had contrived for him. The Major, who for a moment had felt extremely distressed, now really believed that amazement had at first convulsed his brother's features, and that he was in truth as delighted as he now professed to be.

Honorina shook hands with Mr. Burlington, and reseated herself in silence; for she was actually deprived of the power of speech, so shocked was she, so distressed, so disappointed! Ella was scarcely less hurt, and sorely repented that she had persuaded her mother to come to Edenvale. She felt perfectly convinced, that Mr. Burlington's dismay had been real, and his subsequent joy mere acting. He addressed some words to her, but she affected not to

hear him ; for she could not answer him with common civility, while contemplating the disorder apparent in her sister's looks. She immediately afforded her an excuse for retiring, by telling her, she believed her mother wanted her.

Honorina instantly left the room, and a dead silence ensued. The Major was thinking he would never again plan another *agreeable* surprise ; Ella was trying to command her feelings, in order to express what she wished to say with composure ; and Mr. Burlington remained standing with his back to the fire, his countenance denoting strong uneasiness, while he rapidly turned over the leaves of a book he had caught up from the table. Ella at length said, with some trepidation, and a heightened complexion, “ I am sorry you did not let us know that you were coming home, as my mother and sister were only induced

to comply with my repeated entreaties, that they would come and see me, on my assurance, that you intended remaining absent for some time; and——” Ella hesitated, at a loss how to qualify what she had said, when Spencer returned with a look of extreme mortification :

“ I was so misjudging as to imagine I should always be welcome, and that therefore it was unnecessary to apprise you of my intention.”

“ *Welcome!*” repeated Ella, “ certainly *welcome*; you could not be otherwise to your own house; but it is the business of those who are in it, to take care that nobody is introduced there whom *you* may not be inclined to make *welcome*.”

“ My dear Mrs. Burlington! my dear sister!” cried Spencer, approaching her; “ how you mistake my feelings! no persons on earth could be half so welcome to my roof as your

mother and sister. Have I not repeatedly and urgently solicited them to visit Edenvale? and nothing could make me so happy as to receive and entertain them : how you misinterpret my manner?"

The Major, who had been looking extremely uneasy while this dialogue had been passing, now said affectionately, taking Ella's hand, " My dearest Ella, you wrong my brother, indeed you do ; I know his heart to its foundation, and can answer for it you do him injustice."

Ella could with difficulty restrain her tears ; she bit her lip, but dare not speak, and the entrance of her mother proved some relief to her ; for it was impossible any one could receive a more flattering welcome, than that which Spencer now gave Mrs. Valency. He saluted her with the affection of a son, with which his whole manner towards her corre-

sponded. It was evident, by her demeanor, that she had not seen Honoria, or was led to expect any other reception than that she met. Ella, therefore, strove to conceal that anything unpleasant had occurred, and endeavoured to get the better of the resentful sensation she harboured towards Spencer; but she addressed him as seldom as possible.

Meantime the fruits of Honoria's agony in her chamber, for in effect it amounted to little less, was a resolution to exert the utmost powers of self-command to conceal her acute anguish, her deep humiliation. To have been met by Mr. Burlington any where in the manner he had received her on that day, would have hurt her to the soul; but in his *own* house, whither he might imagine she had repaired purposely to throw herself in his way, to be encountered there with the cold blank looks of displeased

amazement. Oh! it was so galling, no possible mortification could have exceeded it.

“ He looked *frightful!*” thought Honoria, “ just as he did the first time I beheld him at church; and, after *all*, I doubt not the opinion I was then inclined to form of him was the most just; but his egregious vanity shall not be gratified by perceiving my folly. Mamma will go to-morrow, and to-day, if *I die* for it, I will *appear* unconcerned.” The strong degree of anger that at present supported her spirit, enabled her to accomplish her design, and Ella was surprised, but very glad to observe her re-enter with a cheerful air; and though she knew it to be counterfeit, *that* was not equally apparent to others. Honoria could perceive, by her mother’s aspect, that *she* had no reason to complain of Mr. Burlington’s reception of her, as she behaved

to him the same as ever, and was very solicitous about his health, which she thought appeared to have suffered. He acknowledged, that he had not been well, and said, he felt a great oppression on his spirits, and believed Bath had not agreed with him. Certainly his spirits appeared very much affected, for his utmost exertions could not enable him to support the strain of gaiety (nor indeed any thing resembling it) with which he had been wont so delightfully to animate society, and the contrast was doubly conspicuous in him. Honoria was not called upon to repel his assiduities, for he attempted not to offer them; he was kind and attentive to every body else, and endeavoured to be so to her; but it was evident that he wished to avoid any particularity, and that his manner towards her was constrained, guarded, and distressing even to himself. How often did Ho-

norina recal what he had said at their last interview, previous to his departure: “ *Then you will be glad to see me, and you will not receive me with coldness and reserve, and look as if you had not forgotten who I was.*”

“ Oh! how descriptive,” thought Honoria, “ of his own manner, on this occasion !”

The Major, in order to give a turn to the scene, proposed paying a visit to Rinaldo, and that Spencer should make him *shew off* for the amusement of the ladies. His brother offered no objection, for he was glad of any thing to relieve him from the burden of conversation. They all descended to the park, and Rinaldo was brought out. There would have been difficulty in determining whether the horse, or the rider, was displayed to the greatest advantage in the exhibition that followed; for the elegance, grace, and activity of each, were equally con-

spicuous. Rinaldo seemed proud of his burthen, and one might have fancied the fine creature exerted his full powers in honour of the occasion.

“ He does *not* look frightful now,” —thought Honoria, as Spencer galloped up to them, after displaying all Rinaldo’s accomplishments—“ he certainly does not look frightful *now*. I wish he always did.” He was without a hat; the exercise had given a rich glow to his complexion, and his fine teeth were conspicuous as he pronounced a smiling eulogium on Rinaldo. A pang darted through Honoria’s breast, severer than any she had ever before experienced. She returned abruptly into the house, and the business of the toilet furnished an excuse for absenting herself till dinner-time. They were all assembled in the dining-room—when she entered, and only waiting for her to seat themselves. The Major sat at

the foot of the table, as Spencer would not permit him to resign that place to him, alledging, that he must be considered as a visitor on that day; but it was evident he wished to avoid the ceremonies that must devolve on him as master of the house. Honoria sat on one side of her sister, who was at the head of the table, and Spencer placed himself next Mrs. Valency on the other side. Ella was well aware of what her sister's feelings must be, and did all in her power to prevent any other person discovering them; her whole attention was devoted to her mother and sister; and though, in general, remarkable for the propriety and elegance with which she presided at table, she on that day betrayed much negligence, and never asked Mr. Burlington what he would take, till the Major said,

“ Ella, you do not perceive that my

brother's plate is still empty—he will take some soup.”

“ I beg his pardon, I did not know he wished for any,” returned Ella, appearing to recollect herself. The Major looked more mortified than his brother, who appeared more wretched than angry, and replied, in a low, dejected, but affectionate tone, to all that was addressed to him. It was impossible Mrs. Valency could be longer blind to the unpleasant aspect of the scene. She had particularly inquired of Ella how Spencer had met Honoria; but Ella, fearing to distress her mother by an accurate description of his manner, merely said, “ Not quite so rapturously as she had expected.” Mrs. Valency, therefore imputed the behaviour of her daughter to *that* circumstance, which she thought them wrong so obviously to resent, and blamed Ella for treating Mr. Burlington so disre-

spectfully. Mrs. Valency had so high an opinion of him, that she could not believe that his actions were the result of any thing but honour, sense, and judgment. She concluded his demeanour, on that occasion, was entirely provoked by Honoria's manner. She had observed that she affected inattention, when he was endeavouring to amuse them with Rinaldo; and she suspected that she had been exercising the power of tormenting on Spencer, in revenge for some fancied coldness in his reception of her. As he had received Mrs. Valency in so flattering a manner, it was natural she should draw an inference to his advantage; but her greatest dread was, that some domestic contention between Ella and her husband might be excited by the conduct of the former towards Mr. Burlington. She never ceased regretting that she had been persuaded

to come to Edenvale, but she was resolved to depart on the morrow, and in the mean time to do all in her power to conciliate all parties. She could not bear to see Spencer look so miserable, and unable to eat, and kindly asked him to take a glass of wine with her. He assented with so much alacrity, and looked so grateful, that Mrs. Valency was affected to an unpleasant degree, and the Major cast a half-reproachful glance on Ella, who immediately said to Spencer, "Will you allow me to join you?" He only thanked her with his eyes, and nothing he could have said would have been half so eloquent. The Major took wine with Honoria, and the pain it seemed to cost her to smile, was felt in his tender heart, and left it inclined to censure, while it was still devoted to his brother.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Yes, yes, I could have lov'd as one,
Who, while his youth's enchantments fall,
Finds something dear to rest upon
Which pays him for the loss of all.

T. MOORE.

ELLA sat a very short time after the cloth was withdrawn, and soon retired with her mother and sister, when Honoria requested she would let her have the carriage, that she might go and drink tea with Mrs. Melville. Ella, sensible of her motive, entirely approved of it, and immediately rang the bell to order the carriage. Mrs. Valency also thought it better she should go. It was a fine

moonlight night, and she was soon on the road. When left alone with Ella, her mother begged her to explain the motive of her resentful carriage towards Mr. Burlington ; when Ella, in self-defence, stated the case simply as it stood. She declared that Mr. Burlington's aspect, on unexpectedly beholding Honoria was unequivocal ; that her sister had done nothing which could warrant a cessation of those attentions he had been wont so openly to pay her, or, even if she had, his disposition was not one that would ponder on a grievance, or resent it, without demanding an explanation ; in short, Ella thought his conduct unjustifiable, and that of a mere male coquette—a sort of animal she had sufficiently proved her aversion to, by her conduct towards Sir Francis Heathcote. Mrs. Valency's alarm was now excited : Mr. Burlington might not be free from the prevailing folly

of his sex ; and finding her daughter in his house, he might imagine she was to be forced upon him whether he would or not, according to the *alleged* modern style of promoting matrimonial alliances. Certainly such a conclusion was not consistent with a strong understanding ; but very wise people have their vulnerable points, and that might be Mr. Burlington's ! His person, fortune, and connexions might lead him to conceive himself an object of pursuit to the other sex ; nay, probably experience had proved it. But still, influenced by her prejudice in his favour, Mrs. Valency was inclined to think his conduct would yet be satisfactorily accounted for, and prove to be connected with the dejection he appeared to labour under ; but she determined to leave his house before breakfast the next morning. Ella said she should not oppose her going, but, as she could

not submit to being so hastily deprived of her society, she should very shortly pay a visit at the cottage.

The Major was no sooner alone with his brother, than, relying on the entire confidence that had always existed between them, he entreated him to impart the source of his obvious unhappiness, and the alteration in his behaviour towards Honoria (for from the manner in which Spencer had always spoken of Honoria, his brother had supposed him violently enamoured of her, and that he intended offering her his hand). Mr. Burlington's tone did not at all assimilate with the Major's on this occasion : the candour that used to distinguish him had vanished : he spoke lightly on a subject to which his brother attached so much importance, and said he was not aware of any great alteration in his manner ; that Miss Valency herself was more reserved than usual ;

that his spirits were much affected by the scene he had lately witnessed at the death of Lady Brookland, and the affliction of his lordship, who had accompanied the body to the family vault, on which occasion he (Spencer) had taken leave of his friend.

“ *Miss Valency!*” mentally repeated the Major; “ never before did I hear him call her any thing but Honoria”—and he was to *rejoin* his friend! Reverting to what he had said, the Major observed, “ Did you not say you left Lord Brookland on his setting out with the remains of his wife? how was that? It is a fortnight since you informed me of her death.”

“ Yes,” returned Spencer, “ but I continued at Bath sometime after his departure.”

The Major was more and more perplexed. He saw plainly that his brother *would* not be unreserved;

there was some mystery which he did not choose to unravel, and the Major was inclined to suspect that he had met with some object who had rivalled Honoria in his affections ; and he felt as angry with him as it was in his nature to feel with a being so beloved. He particularly regretted having encouraged Honoria's predilection for his brother, by rallying her on the subject, and always treating it as if certain of the issue. Nothing like conversation could be supported between the brothers, when confidence was so completely banished ; they felt on a very different footing to what they had ever been before, and sat silently gazing on the fire ; nor did Spencer second his brother's proposal of adjourning to the drawing-room till they were informed tea was ready.

He took rather more wine than usual, and ascended to the drawing-

room prepared to do away the unfavourable impression his late conduct was calculated to excite. The wine had exhilarated him for the moment, for he had taken glass after glass without knowing what he was about; and, though it had not the power to confuse his senses, it enabled him to enter the room with something like his natural air.

As the Major took his accustomed place next Ella, he observed, that he had expected to find company, as he had heard a carriage. Ella said it was the chariot, which had taken Honoria to drink tea at Mrs. Melville's.

"Was she previously engaged?" asked the Major.

"No," returned Ella; "but, as mamma will go to-morrow, Honoria wished to take leave of Elizabeth."

"Honoriam gone!" exclaimed Spencer, too much off his guard to con-

trol his feelings. “ Honoria left Edenvale! and Mrs. Valency going home to-morrow!” Ella was surprised, and said the carriage was to fetch Honoria at ten o’clock. “ But surely you will not go to-morrow!” continued Spencer, sitting down beside Mrs. Valency; “ how unkind to go just as I am returned—I did not think Mrs. Valency would have used me so.”

“ I never intended remaining longer,” she replied, “ and you must excuse my not altering my original intention.”

He said much more to induce her to stay, and seemed extremely vexed when she continued inexorable; when he left her side, and paced up and down the further end of the apartment in visible disorder. He declined taking any tea, and it was scarcely removed, when he asked if it was not time the carriage should go? The Major rang the bell, though

he knew it was early ; but at that moment a footman entered with a note for Mrs. Burlington. It was from her sister, to inform her she should sleep at Mrs. Melville's, and to request her mother would call and take her up as she passed through in the morning. She added an affectionate farewell to Ella and the Major. Ella repeated the purport of the note, when Spencer, who had been watching her countenance, while she read, exclaimed,

“ Then she will return no more to Edenvale, and ——” He did not conclude his speech, but again traversed the apartment in great agitation.

“ But let the carriage go,” said the Major, “ perhaps it may induce her to return.”

“ You may send it if you please, but I am sure she will not come,” replied Ella ; and Spencer cried with

vehemence, “ Well, well, but *let* it go ?” He soon after retired, and they saw no more of him that night. The carriage was sent, but returned empty, with merely a verbal message, corresponding with the purport of the note.

CHAPTER XXV.

In the vicissitudes of life we find,
 Strange turns and twinings in the human mind ;
 And he who seeks consistency of plan,
 Is little vers'd in the great ways of man ;
 The wider still the sphere in which we live,
 The more our calls to suffer and forgive.

CUMBERLAND.

HONORIA's anxiety to get from Edenvale, where, every moment that she remained, augmented her humiliation, induced her to resolve on going to Mrs. Melville's; and she quitted the abode she had repaired to with so much satisfaction, with a determination of not returning to it. She

was in a miserable state to endure indifferent society, but any thing was preferable to that she had quitted under her present circumstances. She was glad to find Mrs. Melville was from home. Elizabeth received her with peculiar satisfaction from not expecting her.

Honoraria did not mention Mr Burlington's arrival, and had not long been seated, when she complained of indisposition, which accounted for the disorder of her looks, and her unusual manner. Elizabeth immediately proposed that she should sleep at their house, and Honoraria offered no objection, on conditions that the servant should take a note to Edenvale to apprize her friends of her intention.

Tea over, and the note dispatched, Honoraria would gladly have retired to the chamber allotted her, but it was not quite ready for her reception, and she requested Elizabeth to read aloud,

which afforded her an excuse for avoiding conversation. She was thus at liberty to give her thoughts wing, but they flew no further than Edenvale. She felt satisfied with herself for the spirited manner in which she had acted, and thought it could not fail of making some impression on Mr. Burlington, who at least would feel mortified at her leaving his house with so little ceremony, and so evidently on account of his return to it. But as she continued to reflect on it, she found she could derive little satisfaction from that source, and her resentment seemed to have exhausted itself in the effort, while her sense of wretchedness became every moment more acute. Spencer had looked miserable ! Ought she not rather to have sought an opportunity to request as a friend, an explanation of his altered manner, and have ascertained whether it arose

from any misunderstanding in which she was concerned ?

“ But no,” thought Honoria, “ though as a *friend* I might have demanded that explanation with composure, yet, feeling as I did, it would have been impossible : nor would I hazard the humiliation which must inevitably follow, should his conduct be merely the result of vanity and caprice ; O, could I but be assured of *that*, I would speedily disengage my heart from the dominion of an object disguised by such insufferable foibles.”

She suddenly recollected the playful manner in which he had accused her of thinking him a coxcomb, and the vivacity with which he had denied the charge ; and again he appeared before her in his most fascinating form. She heaved a sigh so profound as to startle Elizabeth, who instantly ceased reading, and cast on her a look of

the deepest concern. At that moment a single knock at the street door, diverted her attention, and soon after a servant entered, saying, a person requested to speak to Miss Valency immediately.

Honorina followed to another apartment, expecting to find her own woman, who might suppose she was wanted, and had perhaps some message to deliver to her. As she entered the room her hand was seized, and she was drawn forward as the door was thrōwn too, with violence, but by *whom* she could only guess, for there was no light but what proceeded from one dim candle, left on a distant table."

"Honorina! why have you left Edenvale," were the words addressed to her in the voice of Spencer Burlington; he repeated, "Why have you left my house in this contemptuous, disdainful, insulting manner." She

could scarcely support herself, and her throbbing heart felt ready to burst. Surprise was overwhelmed by terror at the vehemence of his manner, and a dread of betraying the emotion he excited, and of faltering in the strict line of propriety on this trying occasion. She had often seen him vexed, but had never before beheld him irritated, and his present demeanor was quite out of character with his natural disposition, which was sensitive, but not irascible. Yet it would have been more gratifying to Honoria to have seen him in a paroxysm of fury, than that he should have suffered her conduct to pass without resenting it. Still she considered that this might only be the effects of mortified vanity, and not of wounded affection. She was too much agitated to command her voice, and he continued ; “ Was it too great an indulgence to remain *one* night under the same roof with me ! ”

Honorina now forced herself to speak as she endeavoured to extricate her hand from his grasp, and said with warmth, " I cannot acknowledge any right you can have, so imperiously to demand an account of my actions, when your own conduct is so inconsistent and unreasonable! I must, therefore, beg leave to do as I think proper, or as may be most agreeable to me, without being expected to give any explanation of my motives."

" You shall *not* do as you please;" he passionately exclaimed, catching both her hands, and drawing her towards the door; " You shall return with me to Edenvale, the carriage is come, and I will reconduct you."

" Mr. Burlington! are you mad? release me instantly, I insist upon it, surely you must be out of your senses."

Her angry manner seemed to bring him to his recollection; he suffered

her to escape, and threw himself into a chair, as he pressed his hands on his temples, repeating to himself—

“ Mad ! out of my senses ! no wonder if I was.”

It would have been barbarity to have left him at that moment ; Honoria *could* not ; his extreme disorder terrified and distressed her on his own account ; and, though she retired to a distance from him, her eyes remained riveted on his agitated form. He continued silent for some moments, when the impetuosity of his manner seemed to have subsided, and he spoke and acted more like himself. He arose, and again approached Honoria, she did not shun him ; for the perturbation of his looks was now tempered by a degree of solemnity. He sunk on one knee as he held her hand to his burning forehead, and implored her forgiveness, for all that she might deem censurable in his conduct. He continued :

“ Think me mad, or out of my senses : perhaps I am ; but, when in future you may be inclined to blame me, remember that I am the most wretched being in existence ! that I think you the most admirable of women, and am ten-fold more miserable, from the consciousness that all which I suffer originates in myself : I will not urge you to return to Edenvale ; no, it is more proper you should not ; God bless you, Honoria,” he added, gasping for breath, and fervently pressing her hand to his lips, he started from his knee, and precipitately left the apartment.

The noise of the carriage driving off aroused Honoria from momentary stupefaction, and she hastened to the chamber, then ready for her reception ; and, having secured the door to prevent intrusion, she for a time resigned herself to the feelings that overwhelmed her. They were such as could not

fail to attend the conviction, that however unintelligible Mr. Burlington's conduct might be in other respects, it was fully apparent he had no further intention of seeking her favour. He had talked of the future as being productive only of misery to him, and as likely to render him blameable in her eyes : he said it was more proper she should *not* return to Edenvale, and that all his unhappiness originated in himself ; from which altogether Honoria could only infer, that he had some other entanglement. Yet, why had not that influenced his conduct before he had been at Bath ? The space of one short month, nay, a much shorter period, seemed to have wrought this extraordinary change ; as even in his letters to his brother he had spoken of her the same as ever, and it even now appeared as if his attachment to her still existed ; or why that agitation, which he had on

that night betrayed ; why had he expressed his admiration of her, and why had he been so violently affected at parting ? But to think that he still loved her and was miserable, softened her feelings to the most pitiable degree ; and she rather tried to persuade herself that his whole conduct was the result of vanity, for in that supposition she found fuel for resentment, which was the best corrective she could at that moment oppose to the weakness which oppressed her. She went to bed in order to avoid seeing Miss Melville, who repaired to her chamber door ; but, on finding that she had retired, she did not persecute her with importunities.

The servant had informed Elizabeth that it was Mr. Burlington who had come with such a gentle knock, and desired to speak with Miss Valency, with a caution that she might

not be told it was him; and from what she could infer, Elizabeth was not at a loss in concluding that something unpleasant had happened.

END OF VOL. I.





